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Ancient Indian Furniture

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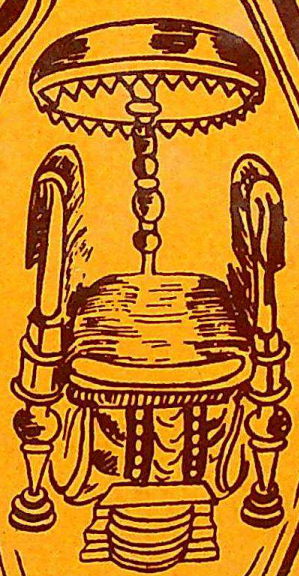

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K. KRISHNA MURTHY

Pratibha Prakashan
A-393, Shastri Nagar
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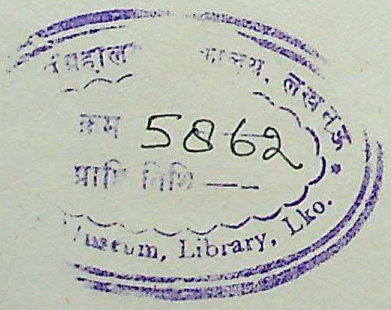

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PREFACE

Over decades since no substantial and comprehensive book on ancient Indian furniture has forth come except for some stray articles here and there. Owing to the recent trend of research to study the material culture of the ancient past by some scholars-poineers among them being K. de B. Codrington, Motichandra, Sivaramamurti, Agrawala and others. The various aspects of material culture like dress, ornaments, coiffures, furniture etc. are finding place in the form of chapters in such studies. I have published some articles on ancient furniture in the journals like Orissa Historical Research Society Journal etc. and incorporated a chapter on furniture in my books entitled "*Nāgārjunakoṇḍa-A Cultural Study*" and "*Gāndhāra Sculptures—A Cultural Survey*. Thus, the present book "*Ancient Indian Furniture*" becomes the first comprehensive, substantial book on the subject dealing with the furniture known to the people lived during 2nd Cent. B.C. to 6th-7th Cent. A.D. In bringing out such study, the sculptural and mural data supplimented by the literary evidences form a very potential source. As the wood is the perishable material the remanants of the ancient furniture is left only in the plastic representation and as such the study of the plastic art is the abundant source for comprehending the ancient Indian furniture.

The sculptures of Barhut, Sanchi, Amaravati, Gāndhāra, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Mathura and also the paintings of Ajanta impeccably portray variety of furniture articles known to the period under study. It is these sculptures and murals that form the basic data of my study and wherever possible other archaeological evidences like terracottas, coins etc., have also been taken into consideration to supplement the study. These evidences have been assiduously corroborated with the literary ones while delineating the foreign impact or influence on Indian furniture.

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In the preparation of this book, I received valuable help in various ways from many people. First and foremost is Shri R.Y. Krishna Rao, whose devoted, meticulous and splendid typing of the manuscript has alone achieved the present form of the type-script. I owe him my grateful thanks. Miss Devaki Rani has typed out the bibliography of this book and my thanks are due to her.

I wish to express my thanks to Sri S. Sudhakar Naidu for the preparation of all the line drawings incorporated in this book. Shri M. Rami Reddy, has composed the plates of the line drawings. Sarvashri Edwin and Sudhir Kumar, have taken the photographs of the illustrations included in this book. To all of them, I express my thankfulness.

The illustrations included in this book are *by the courtesy of the Archaeological Survey of India.*

My thanks are also due to Shri Swadesh Prasad Singhal, the Publisher, Sundeep Prakashan, Delhi for neat and speedy printing of this book in a record time.

DR. K. KRISHNA MURTHY

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ABBREVIATIONS

AI	:	Ancient India
Aṅg	:	Aṅguttara Nikāya
ASIAR	:	Archaeological Survey of India Annual Reports
AV	:	Atharva Veda
DB	:	Book of Discipline
CU	:	Cullavagga
IA	:	Indian Antiquary
IAR	:	Indian Archaeology—A Review
IC	:	Indian Culture
J	:	Jātaka
JAHRS	:	Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society
JOI	:	Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda
Kāt. SS	:	Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra
M	:	Mānasāra
Māl	:	Mālavikāgnimitram
Panch. Br	:	Panchavimśa Brāhmaṇa
Raghu	:	Raghuvaṁsa
RV	:	Rigveda
Śak	:	Śākuntalaṁ
Sank. SS	:	Śānkhāyana Śrauta Sutra
SBE	:	Sacred Books of the East
Taitt. Br	:	Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa
Vin	:	Vinaya Texts
Vik	:	Vikramorvaśiyaṁ

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1

INTRODUCTION

Man's prediliction for comfort has created a host of house-hold articles. Furniture[1] is one among them. In the manufacture of furniture, wood has always been the basic material due to several reasons. It is available wherever conditions have favoured human living. It is easily workable to different decorative designs. It can be joined by many contrivances viz., by nailing, glewing etc. It produces less noise under impact than other materials of equal strength. It is relatively light in weight. It may be easily repaired when broken. It possesses intrinsic beauty in an infinite variety of colour, texture and pattern. It can be worked in many ways to enhance beauty. Moreover, in a country like India where wood is amply available, it is probably the only material used most commonly. Again, it appears that in early times metals did not find favour with the Indians as it did with the ancient Greeks and Romans in the fashioning of furniture. This may just as well be due to the availability of excellent quality of wood within the country itself.

However, at the same time wood has the greatest disadvantage too. It is a perishable material. The hot and damp climate of the country has made its survival for long centuries impossible. The total absence of any piece of furniture from the excavated remains[2] is undoubtedly due to its being fashioned out of wood or similar other perishable material. We have therefore, to depend solely on the plastic representa-

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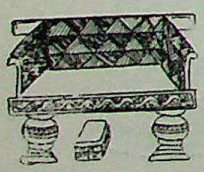
tion of furniture, if we seek to comprehend the ancient Indian furniture known through the ages. For this, the sculptures of Barhut, Sanchi, Amaravati, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Gāndhāra, Mathura and the murals of Ajanta form the data of our study.

Premise of the material study.

The following study of the furniture depicted in the sculptures and paintings in the early Indian art is based on the hypothesis that the artists of the early Indian sculptures, while depicting the life scenes of the Buddha, Jātaka stories etc., in the reliefs, had their mind on the contemporary persons and things around them. Although they provided the figures and the backgrounds in accordance with the requirements of the texts, in carving the Jātaka stories on stone, the artists were conscious of their limitations. They had to work within certain limits, showing, for the most part only what the stories required. However, the artists have taken that much liberty as would not come into conflict with the general trend of the texts. It is just possible that they replenished the exact parallels with those occurring in the Jātakas and other life scenes from amongst their society and environment. Thus, the furniture like the many other items found in the sculptures and the paintings may have been indigenous to the land to which they formed part.

In the following pages, an attempt has been made to describe in this direction the furniture depicted in the plastic art. An attempt has also been made to locate contemporary plastic parallels to corroborate the contemporary furniture with the literary descriptions and finally to confirm them from the archaeological evidences wherever possible. All the sculptures recovered during the explorations and excavations at Barhut, Sanchi, Amaravati, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Gāndhāra, Mathura and the murals of Ajanta have been taken into consideration for the study of the furniture of the period



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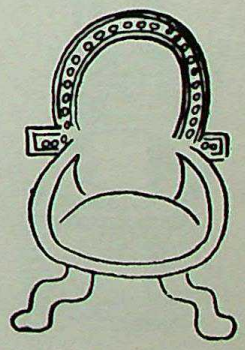
ranging from 2nd Cent. B.C. to 6th-7th cent. A.D. The result of this study is evidently the visualisation of the furniture known to the Sunga, Sātavāhana, Ikshvākus, Kushāṇa and Vākātaka periods. There is no separate and comprehensive work on furniture except for some articles published in the research journals here and there or a chapter in books on cultural study. I have dealt with furniture of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa and Gāndhāra exhaustively, in my books entitled "Nāgārjunakoṇḍa A Cultural Study" and "The Gāndhāra Sculptures—A Cultural Survey", respectively and these chapters have been fully utilised in the present book. The present work "*Ancient Indian Furniture*" is intended to offer a complete account of the furniture of the people lived during 2nd Cent. B.C. to 6th-7th Cent. A.D. Needless to say, that in enumerating the furniture as reflected in the sculptural and mural representations, literary data has been of immense value.

Literary Evidence

The ancient Indian literature abounds with references to the furniture known through the ages. The common Indian term to denote furniture is Pāli *Senāsana* and Sanskrit, *Śayanāsana*. The *Śayanāsana* or *Senāsana* is a compound consisting of two words-*Śayana* and *āsana*. When furniture is meant to be denoted in a collective sense we have the use of the form *Senāsanam* or *Sayanāsanam* and where it is meant to be denoted in detail, we have the use of the plural form *Śayanānyāsanāni*[3]. Thus, furniture was technically known as *Śayanāsana* or *Śayyāsana* corresponding to Pāli *Senāsana*.



As early as in Vedic period we get references to the furniture articles. The terms like *Paryaṅka*[4] *Āsandi*,[5] *Proṣṭha*[6] *Talpa*,[7] *Vahya*,[8] *Śayana*,[9] *Upabarhaṇa*,[10] *Upavāsana*,[11] *Upastaraṇa*,[12] *Upadhāna*[13] denote the furniture known to the Vedic India. *Paryaṅka* denoted a seat for the Brāhmins[14]. It corresponded

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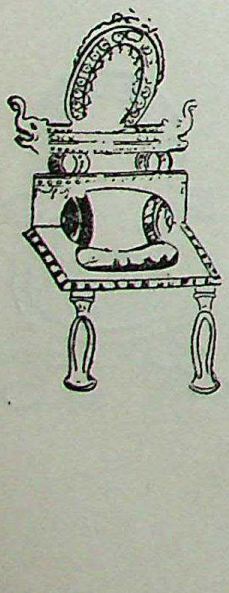
more a throne[15] and the *Pallaṅka* of the Buddhist text and the *Paryaṅka* seem to connote the same meaning, throne and interestingly it gets frequent sculptural and mural depictions.

The *Āsandī* type of furniture was a long reclining chair resembling the modern *sofa.* The *Atharva Veda*[16] informs that it had two feet, length-wise and cross-pieces forward and cross-cords, showing that it was made of wood (*Udumbara*) and also cording. According to the *Śathapatha Brāhmaṇa*[17] it was an elaborate seat made of *Khadhira* wood, perforated (*vi-tṛṇṇa*) and joined with straps (*Vardhra-yutā*). This *āsandī* type of furniture finds place in the lithiographic delineations at several places.

The *proṣṭha* was a bench[18] and the seats with solid lower structure and without arm-rests depicted in the sculptures in all probability, represent the *Proṣṭha.*

The term *Talpa*[19] *Vahya*[20] and *Śayana*[21] denoted bed or couch. One made of *Udumbara* wood is mentioned in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*[22]. The *Upa-barhaṇa* and the *Upadhāna* were the pillows or cushions provided invariably to *āsandī.* The *Upavāsana* and *Upastaraṇa* were the coverlets generally used for the seats.

Several articles of furniture find mention in the Sūtras. The house holder is enjoined upon to ascend a couch at the conclusion of *Śravaṇā* sacrifice. A seat called *Āsandī* had four legs and was inter-woven with cords of *Muñja* grass. The *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra* (X, 12) and the *Sānkhāyana Śrautasūtra* (XVII, 2, 6-9) lay down that the *Āsandī* (made of *Udumbara* wood) legs should be one span high, that the length-wise and cross-pieces of this seat should be one cubit long and that it should be woven with cords of *Muñja* grass. The *Vāsishṭha Dharma Sūtra* (XII. 36) forbids a Snātaka to take his meals on a chair. A soft seat called *Bhadrapīṭha* is mentioned in the *Pāraskara Gṛihya Sūtra*[23]. The priests of the *Mahāvrata* rite were allotted *Bṛisīs*, cushions of grass[24]. The



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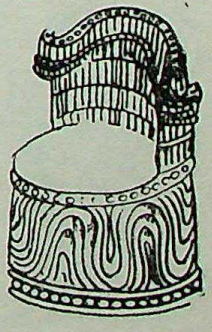
skins of a red bull and a black antelope were used as seats on sacrificial occasions. Besides, a plaited seats of various kinds of grass was also in vogue[25].

As examples of household furniture, Pāṇini[26] in his *Ashṭādhyāyī* mentions *Śayyā* (bed) *Khaṭvā* (cot), *Paryaṅka* or *Palyaṅka* (couch), *Āsandī-settee* (a royal throne), *Vishtara* (an ordinary seat) and *parpa* (a wheeled chair for disabled persons). Interestingly, all these are represented in the sculptures.

Much can be known about the furniture from the Jaina and Buddhist literatures. In Jaina literature we come across furniture articles like rich beds, cushions, pillows, chairs etc. Among the marriage gifts mention has been made of *Pāviḍha* (foot-stool), *Bhisiyā* (seat), *Pallaṅkāya* (couches) and *Paḍīsijjā* (sofas). Various kinds of chairs like swan chairs, heron chairs, eagle chairs, tall chairs (*Oṇaya*), sloping chairs (*Paṇaya*), long chairs, fine chairs (*bhadda*), winged chairs (*Pakkha*), crocodile chairs, lotus chairs, and Disāsovatthiya chairs are mentioned[27].

The Buddhist texts go long way in supplementing the history of the furniture of the period. The furniture items such as *Āsandī Mīḍhi* (bench), *Palliaṅka* (throne), three—legged chairs, *Mañca* (seat or bed stead or couch), *Vidalam-añca*, or *Vettamañca* (cane-seat) *Kochcha* (cane-bottomed chair), *Paṭṭakandolika* (wicker stands), *Bhojānaphalakas* (tables), *Pāda-piṭhas* (foot-stools), *Bhisi* (bolster) *Bimbohaṇa* (pillow) etc., are mentioned in the Vinaya texts[28] and interestingly, many of these articles are represented in the sculptures and murals of the period under study.



Bharata in his Nāṭyaśāstra[29] prescribes seats according to the status of the people and this incidentally throws light on the variety of furniture known to the period. Thus, gods and kings in a royal court are to be given a lion-seat (throne). The priests and ministers are given cane-seat. The

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commander of the army and the crowned princes should occupy Muṇḍā-seat. The Brāhmins will occupy the wooden seats while the other princes would take carpet seat[30].

Similarly, the chief queen should be given a lion seat in a royal court. The female relatives, wives of the kings other than the chief queen should occupy *muṇḍā* seat. The wives of the priests and ministers have been given cane-seat. The concubines of the kings are given seat consisting of cloth, skin or carpet. The wives of brahmins and female ascetics are provided seat made of wood (*Paṭṭa*). The wives of the vaishyas are given cushion seats and for the remaining women the ground will be the seat. But, one can take any seat according to ones own liking while residing in ones own house.

The seats for the ascetics should be according to the rules of the order they are observing. The performer of the sacrifices should sit on *Vṛiṣi. muṇḍā* seat or cane-seat. The king should offer seats equal in height to that of his own to persons equal to him. To the persons of medium importance, the seats of middling height and to persons who are superior to him, should be given a more elevated seat, while the lowly persons are to be seated on the ground. What is interesting is that in the lithic representation, many of the rules prescribed by Bharata in his *Nāṭyaśāstra* are well answered. Thus, the kings, queens, princes, sages, brāhmins at times in sculptures and murals are given prescribed seats as enjoined in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata.

Kālidāsa's references to the furniture articles are copious. Several kinds of furniture items like thrones, high seats, benches, bedstead, boxes etc., are mentioned in his *kavyas*[31]. *Siṁhāsana*,[32] the throne of the king was made of gold with set gems. There were also other seats made of gold and of precious stones which ought to have been the property of the rich[33] There is also reference to beautiful seats made of ivory covered[34] with white covers. Again *Bhadrapiṭha* or *Bhadrāsana* was another kind of seat in circular or rectangular shape[35].

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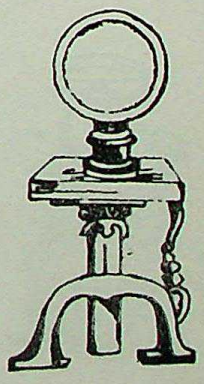
Viṣṭara[36] was also an honoured seat, a high seat worthy of royal household. In all probability, those rich seats depicted in the Ajanta murals may represent *Viṣṭara* type of seats. Besides these, there were benches and bedsteads. *Mañca* was a bench. Acharya explains it as a bedstead, couch, bed, a sofa a chair, a throne, a plateform, a pulpit.[37] *Talpa* was again a high bedstead.[38] The coverlets like *Uttarachada* and *āstarṇa* are also mentioned in the *kāvyas*[39]. The *Uttarachada* appears to have been a bed cover or a cover to *Āsandi* (sofa). The other coverlet *Āstarṇa* seems to have been used for covering chairs, cushions and the like.

Boxes were also a necessary furniture of the house-hold and have been variously referred to as *Mañjuṣa*[40]. *Karaṇḍaka*[41] and *Talarṛntapidhāna.*[42]

Some of these furniture articles described by Kālidāsa do find place in the early Indian sculptures and in the Ajanta paintings.

Later Silpa texts like *Mānasāra*,[43] recounts furniture articles and their prolific use in chapter XLIV. The words like *Siṁhāsana, Mañca, Mañcalī, Pallaṅkāsana* etc., are referred to mean the furniture material. The *Mānasāra* mentions a throne marked with lion.[44] In fact, the *Mānasāra* enumerates ten kinds of thrones namely—*Padmāsana padmakeśara, Padma-bhadra, Śrī-bhadra, Śrī-visāla, Bhadrāsana Padma-bhaṇḍaka, Śrī.mukha, Vijaya* etc. Besides, there is another throne known as *Vajrāsana.*



Again, the *Mānasāra* refers to several words such as *Kākāshta, Khaṭṭaka, Khaṭva nishadyā, Paryaṅka, Mañca* and *Mañcalī* which are synonymous and all mean a bedstead. According to the same work *Paryaṅkas* are of two kinds viz. *Bālaparyaṅka* and *Paryaṅka.* The former is intended for the children while the latter is meant for elders. They are distinguished by their sizes. Interestingly, of the *Āgamas Suprabhedāgama*[45] deals with the furniture articles like *Āsana*

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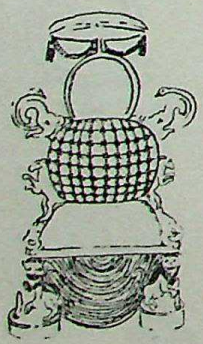
(chair, seats), *Paryaṅka* (bedsteads, couches etc.), *Siṁhāsana* (thrones).

In *Amarakośa*[46] we get scanty references to the furniture articles. It also refers to the word *mañca*[47] to mean a bedstead.

We have clear evidence in the Vātsyāyana's *Kamasūtra* of the typical articles of domestic furniture then in use among the fashionable people, *Nāgarakas*. "The articles that Vātsyāyana first draws attention to in the *Nāgaraka's* apartment are two couches with beds, soft and comfortable and spotlessly white, sinking in the middle and having rests for the head and feet at the top and the bottom. At the head of his bed is a *Kūrcha-sthāna*, a stand or perhaps a niche for placing an image of the deity he worships, besides, at the head there is also an elevated shelf serving the purpose of a table, whereon are placed articles necessary for his toilet in the early dawn. On the floor is a vessel for catching the spittle. On the wall, on *Nāgadantakas* (brackets) are arranged his *Vīnā*, a casket containing brushes and other requisites for painting, a book and the garland of the *Kuraṇṭaka* flower. Not far from the couch, on the floor, is spread a carpet with cushions for the head and besides, there are boards, for playing a chess and dice. Outside the room is the *Nāgaraka's* aviary where are hung cages of birds for game and sport[48]"



Varāhamihira's *Bṛihat Saṁhitā* offers adequate information about the furniture prevailed in his time. The words like *Śayana* or *Śayyā* (bed and bedstead as a whole), *Khaṭvā* (cot), *Paryaṅka* (couch or high seat), *Āsana* (a seat), *Bhadrasana* or *Bhadrapiṭha* (throne), *Piṭha* (a stool or a seat *Upadhāna* (a pillow), *Śayanācchādana* or *Śayanāstaraṇa* (bed sheet) are mentioned in the *Brihat Saṁhitā* to constitute furniture articles known to Varahamihira's time.[49] The measurements of the couches meant for the kings, princes, ministers, army-chiefs and royal priests are prescribed. In

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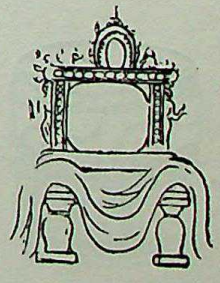
the manufacture of a couch the *Pradakṣināgra* order should be strictly adhered to. Paryaṅkas were usually made from the timber of a single tree. The *Paryaṅka* meant for royal house hold was fabricated from the sandal wood, covered with gold and decked with jewels.

Bhadrāsana was a royal seat and it was also called *Bhadrapīṭha*. In the ceremonious ablutions, the king sat on a *Bhadrāsana* placed over the skins of certain animals.[50] It appears from the *Rāmāyaṇa* (II.26.17) that it was a sign of royalty and carried by an attendant in front of the king.[51]

Sculptural and Mural evidences

The depiction of furniture in the early Indian sculptures of Barhut, Sanchi, Amaravati (early period) etc., is however scanty as compared to their depiction in the later reliefs of Amaravati, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Mathura, Gāndhāra, paintings of Ajanta etc. The paucity of its representation at Barhut, Sanchi and in early sculptures of Amaravati may perhaps be explained by referring to the fact that the early phase of Buddhism in Andhra Pradesh represents more of symbolism. The anthropomorphic form of Buddha and the life scenes of the Buddha have not yet attained popularity in the visual representations at these early centres of Indian art. The depiction of the society in the sculptures is obviously therefore sparse. Thereby, the depiction of the furniture articles which form part of the domestic equipment of the society is also scanty. However, the available examples in these early representations are adequate to have an idea of the furniture known to the period. The later sculptures at Amaravati, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Mathura, Gāndhāra, the paintings of Ajanta depict copious furniture articles. The thrones, couches, chairs represented in these sculptures exhibit high order of artistic expression which bears testimony to an advanced state of sophistication. Broadly, the furniture as gleaned from ancient Indian sculptures and murals can be classified as



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thrones, chairs, wheeled chairs, seats and *moras*, wicker stands, foot-stools or foot-rests and bedsteads. In the following pages each item of these furniture articles have been dealt with, in detail, forming separate heading for each item of furniture.

The study of the early Indian plastic art housed in various museums outside the country as well as those available within India formed a potential source in knowing the furniture of the period under review.

REFERENCES

1. American usage limits the word furniture to movable articles equivalent to the French *meuble* or German *mobel*—vide Aronson, *The Encyclopaedia of Furniture*, (London, 1926), P. 234.
2. However, ancient Egypt has left a fairly complete record of its daily life in the contents as well as the decoration of its tombs, thanks to the custom of supplying the dead with the mundane articles planned to remind the soul of its former association. From this, it is quite probable that the Egyptian inventiveness supplied the shapes and models for most articles of furniture in ancient times (Aronson, *loc. cit.*, p. 132).
3. *IC.*, Vol. II, No. 1, P. 67; Cf. *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Sundarākāṇda* IV, 41: In the *Susrūta*, the *Rajavallabha* and the *Bhāvaprakāsa*, we come across the use of *Śayyāsana* instead of *Śayanāsana* (*IC*, Vol. II, no.1, P. 67; foot-note 2). The *Śayyāsana—Laksaṇādhyaya* (Ch. LXXVIII) of the *Brihat Saṁhitā* deals with furniture (A.M. Shastri, *India as seen in the Bṛihat Saṁhitā of Varahamihira*, (Delhi, 1969), P. 250.
4. *AV.*, XV, 3, 3.
5. Macdonell & Keith, *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, (Oxford, 1912) Vol. I, P. 71.
6. *RV.*, VII, 55, 8
7. *RV.*, VII, 55, 88: *AV.*, V, 17, 12: XIV, 2, 31, 41; *Taitt. Sam.* VI. 2, 6, 4.
8. *RV.*, VII, 55, 8; *AV*, IV, 5, 3; 20, 3: XIV, 2, 30.
9. *AV.*, III, 2, 5, 7; V, 29, 8.
10. Macdonell & Keith, *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, (Oxford, 1912), Vol., I, P. 71.

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11. *Ibid.*, i, 71.
12. *RV.*, IX., 69, 5; *AV.*, V, 19, 12; *Kaus. Up.* i., 5.
13. *AV.*, XIV, 2.65.
14. *Kauṣitaki Upaniṣad*, i., 5.
15. Cf. Weber, *Indische Studien*, 1, 3. 97.
16. XV, 3, 2, Cf. Seq.
17. V, 4, 4, 1.
18. VII, 55, 8.
19. *RV.*, VII. 55, 8; *AV*, V, 17, 12; XIV, 2, 31.41; *Tait. Saṁhitā*, VI, 2, 6, 4; *Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa*, ii, 2, 5, 3, *Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa*, XXIII, 4, 2; XXV, 1, 10.
20. *RV.*, VII, 55, 8; *AV.*, IV. 5.3; 20, 3; XIV, 2,30.
21. *AV.*, III, 25, 1; 29.8; *Śathpatha Brāhmaṇa*, VI.5, 1, 2, 7, 4.
22. 1, 2, 6, 5.
23. I, 15., 4.
24. *Kāt. S.S.* XIII, 3.1; *Sānkh SS.*, XVII, 4,7.
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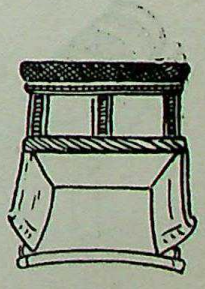
27. Jagadish Chandra Jain, *Life in Ancient India as depicted in the Jain Cannons*, (Bombay, 1947), P. 157.
28. *IC.*, Vol. II, No.1, PP. 67-74.
29. M.M. Ghosh, *The Nāṭyaśāstra—A treatise on Hindu Dramaturgy and Histronics ascribed to Bharatamuni*, Vol. I, (Calcutta-1950), PP. 234-236.
30. *Ibid.*, P. 235.
31. B.S. Upadhyaya, *India in Kālidāsa*, Delhi, 1947, P. 214-216.
32. *Raghu.*, VI, 6.
33. *Raghu*, VI.4; VII. 28; *Vik.*, P. 130.
34. *Raghū.*, XVII. 21
35. *Ibid.*, IV., Also see T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *The Hindu Iconography*. Vol. I., P. 20.
36. *Vik.*, P. 138, *Ku.*, VII. 72.
37. P.K. Acharya, *A Dictionary of Hindu Architecture*, P. 461.
38. *Raghu.*, V. 75; XVI.6
39. *Raghu*, V. 65; XVII. 21; *Ku.*, VII, 89; *Raghu*, VI. 4.
40. *Māl.*, PP. 73, 87, 104; *Parnamañjūṣā, Tailamañjūṣā, Vastramañjūṣā* are the three kinds known to the period.
41. *Sāk.*, P. 217.
42. *Vik.*, P. 121.
43. P.K. Acharya, *Mānasāra, An Encyclopaedia of Hindu Architecture*, Vol. VII, PP.298, 304, 380, 459, 499, 522 etc.



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44. Siṁha-mudrita-manoharasanam !
Kesari Lanchitam tv-atha manoharasanam !!
"*Mānasāra*", XLV, 204, 206.
45. Acharya, *Op. cit.*, P. 619.
46. *Amarakośa*, 2, 3, 138.
47. Mañca-Paryaṅka-Palyankah Sanah Palayaṅ-komañca-Paryaṅka-Vṛṣhi-Paryasti Kasuche iti mīḍini (*Amarakośa*, 2, 3, 138).
48. *IC.*, Vol. II, No. 1, P. 74-75. Also see H. Chakladar, *Social Life in Ancient India* (Calcutta, 1954), P. 109-110.
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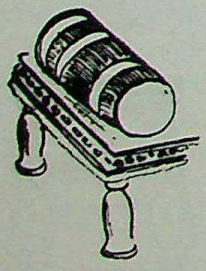
51. *Raghu*, XVII. 10.



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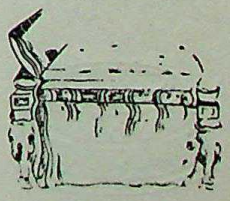
LSR 62

2

THRONES (ĀSANAS)

The early Indian sculptures depict a good variety of thrones. "The throne" says Hocart[1] "expresses by physical means the king's moral superiority and it symbolizes a womb of sovereignty (*Kshātra*). Some of the thrones represented in the early Indian sculptures are very simple; they were made to accommodate one person; others are decorated and provide space for two or even three persons. Some are so low that they need no foot-stools while some are high enough to necessitate either a foot-stool or a flight of steps. Some thrones have four legs while some have solid low appendages. Of the legged thrones some have pillar shaped or *āmalaka* shaped legs while others have animal shaped supports. Smaller thrones are more like chairs while the larger ones are like the *sofas* or long benches. Thus, the thrones depicted in the sculptures fall under two categories namely, small and large thrones. These have been described under as they occur in the sculptures of Barhut, Sanchi, Amaravati, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Gāndhāra, Mathura and in the paintings of Ajanta.

(i) SMALL THRONES



At Barhut the representations of small thrones, although are sparse, yet the available specimens give a fair idea of this item of furniture. In Barhut sculptures two types of small thrones namely, throne with solid lower structure but devoid of arms and throne having legs with arm-rests are depicted.

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(a) *Throne with solid lower structure but devoid of arms*

This variety is illustrated in the scene[2] depicting *Mahāummaga Jātaka.* Its seat frame appears to be square in shape. The frame of the top bar of the back has inward ledge. The foot-stool provided (*Pada-pīṭah*) in the front is obviously for foot-rest.

(b) *Throne having legs with arm-rests but without back*

In this case the throne[3] has a rectangular seat mounted on legs with broad squarish base. It has no back, but is provided with side-arms (*Fig. I, 1*). This kind of throne is only confined to early period. It is depicted in the Suṇga and the Sātavāhana art. Some of the terracottas of Kausambi of the Sātavāhana period reveal such thrones.[4] It is present at Gāndhāra[5] and scarcely at Ajanta[6] in early period. But what is interesting is that such seats with side-arms were very common in Hellenistic and Roman world from where this type appears to have been found its way into India. However, it does not appear to have found favour with Indians in the later period for the obvious reason that it has not afforded to sit in the true Indian fashion of cross-legged posture.

In another panel[7] depicting *Takkariya Jātaka*, a throne with back, arm-rests and having legs is depicted. The king is shown sitting on it. However, its leg portion in the sculpture is mutilated. It has a squarish seat with side-arms. The side-arms are decorated both externally and internally with oblique slashes (*Fig. I, 2*).

The representation of small thrones at Sanchi is again scanty. Only two varieties of small thrones viz., the throne having legs without arms and the throne having animal figures as legs but devoid of arm-rests are seen in the Sanchi sculptures.

(a) *Throne having legs without arm-rests*

This variety is illustrated on the *toraṇa* gateway looking south.[8] It is having pillar shaped or *āmalaka* shaped legs

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(*Fig. I, 3&4*). The legs are akin to the *āmalaka vantikā pīṭhaṁ* mentioned in Pāli text. It is provided with a rectangular foot-stool. The parallel examples of this variety of throne can also be seen at Ghaṇṭaśāla, Goli etc. In this case, the king is resting his left hand on the top bar of the back, while his right hand is kept akimbo on the thigh.

(b) *Throne having legs with arm-rests but devoid of back*

This type of throne occurs on the western gate-way at Sanchi.[9] It has a rectangular seat mounted on legs. It has no back but is provided with side-arms. The side arms are decorated with vertical multi-bands (*Fig. 1,5,*). As already pointed out this throne has parallels at Barhut and from some of the terracottas of Kausambi.

(*c*) *Throne having animal figures as legs but devoid of arm-rests*

This variety of throne is depicted in the Sanchi sculptures. Since the ends of the top bar of the back are mutilated their details are not available. The throne has no arm-rests, but has animal shaped support. The animal figures represent a lion as its paws can be made out. This is the solitary example of Biṁhāsana in the whole range of the Sanchi reliefs. However, the throne is not provided with any foot-stool.

At Amaravati the depiction of small thrones seem to be varied and alluring, reflecting on their popularity in the Sātavāhana period.

(*a*) *Throne having legs and without arm-rests*

The panel[10] illustrating "Buddha's preaching" reveals the Buddha sitting on this type of throne. It is just like a chair without arm-rests and having legs that are carved like a pillar. The details of the back are not however clear. A square foot-stool is provided to this throne.

In another instance[11] a small throne occurs where *Dharma-Cakra* is shown installed on it. In this case, the throne is

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exactly similar to the above (*Fig. I, 6,*), except for the back of the throne which is decorated with the Buddhist rail pattern (*Sūchi* and *Urdhvapaṭa*). The legs are carved in pillar shape and the capital of the pillar consists of ribbed globe. The throne is also provided with a *pādapīṭha* of rectangular shape.

(*b*) *A throne with animal figures as arm-rests and having legs*

This variety is illustrated by the throne of the king Bandhuma depicted in the panel[12] revealing "the presence of the king Bandhuma'. The ends of the top bar of the back have *makara-mukhas.* Arm rests are seen supported by animal shaped figures. The animals carved appears to be lions. The pillar shaped legs of the throne are clearly visible.

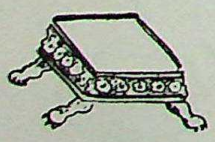
(*c*) *Throne with animal figures as arm-rests and legs*

In the panel[13] illustrating "the story of Māndhātu", the king Māndhātu is shown sitting on this type of throne. The lion figures are supporting the legs as well as the arm-rest terminals. The top bar of the back has *makara mukha* terminals. As usual, the foot stool is provided to the throne. This is an excellent example of a *Simhāsana.*

At Nāgārjunakoṇḍa small thrones are depicted at several places which give a fair idea of the thrones of the Ikshvāku period.

(*a*) *Throne with a solid lower structure devoid of arm-rests.*

This variety is illustrated by the Buddha's throne in panel[14] depicting "Conversion of Śākya princess". Its seat-frame as seen in the sculptures appears square in shape. The ends of the top bar of the back slightly project out and have curved terminals. The sides of the back are decorated with a row of oblique lines on the upper and lower cornices, while its oblong middle portion contains vertical rows of circlets. A rectangular foot-stool (*pādapīṭha*) is put in front of the throne for keeping the foot.



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(*b*) *Throne with a solid lower structure and arm-rests*

This type of throne can be seen in the Nāgārjuṇakoṇḍa sculptures more than once. In this type of throne the projected top bar of the back-rest of the throne is supported by the arches. The arm-rests of this throne are plain and rounded. The solid base contains a beaded decoration on the lower cornices. On the middle oblong portion of the solid structure can be seen a vertical band (*Fig.* 11,7)

(*c*) *Throne having legs and without arm-rest*

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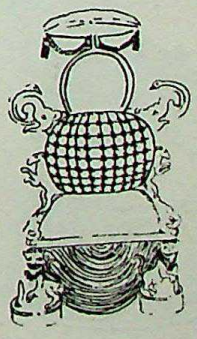
The throne of the king Śuddhodana depicted in the panel[15] "casting the horoscope" reveals this type of throne. It is just like a chair without arm-rests and having four legs that are well carved and shaped like pillar. The capital of the pillar consists of a ribbed globe. The ends of the projected top bar of the back have *makara-mukhas* as terminals which are in turn supported by rampant animals, presumably lions. The back is decorated with the Buddhist rail pattern (*Suchi and ūrdhvapaṭa*). Since the seat of the throne is very high a foot-stool is provided in its front. The king Śuddhodhana is seen resting his left leg on it; his right leg is kept akimbo.

Another sculpture revealing[16] "Siddhārtha and the mighty bow" offers a similar throne. The prince Siddhārtha is seen sitting over it with his right leg dangling. The ends of the top bar of the back of the throne are decorated with a row of beaded pattern. The throne has pillar-shaped or *āmalaka* shaped legs. The *āmalaka vantikā pīṭhaṁ* mentioned only in the Pali text is a chair with a legs of this type.



(*d*) *Throne with arm-rests and having legs*

This variety is illustrated by the throne on which *Dharmacakra* is installed in the panel[17] depicting "the first sermon in the deer park". It is having rounded arm-rests and pillar shaped or *āmalaka* shaped legs. A rectangular foot-stool is seen kept in front of the throne. Parallel examples of it also occur at Goli[18] and Ghaṇṭaśāla.[19]

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(*e*) *Throne having animal figures as legs but devoid of arm-rests*

The throne on which the Buddha is shown sitting in the panel[20] depicting "the Buddha preaching to four monks" illustrates this variety. The throne has no arm-rests and has four animal shaped supports instead of pillar shaped or *āmalaka* shaped legs. The animal figures represent lions as their manes are seen distinctly. The ends of the top bar of the back-rest have ball like terminals and are supported by figures of rampant animals perhaps lions (*Fig.* 11,8). A rectangular foot-stool is seen in front of the throne.

(*f*) *A throne with animal figures as supports of arm-rests and legs*

In the panel[21] illustrating "the episodes in the career of Buddha," this variety of throne is represented twice. In both the cases, the lion figures are seen supporting the legs as well as the arm-rest terminals. The top bar of the back of the both the thrones have projecting ends and they are supported by the arches (*Fig.* 11,9).

The depiction of small thrones in the Gāndhāra art is not wanting. They are as under :

(a) *Throne with solid lower base*

The Gāndhāra reliefs depict this kind of throne invariably, occupied by the Buddha or Bodhisattva[22]. This type of throne has neither arms nor back. It has a solid lower base which in some cases, is richly ornamented. Many times in the reliefs, this throne is seen strewn with grass. In one panel[23] depicting the "presentation of the four begging bowls", the Buddha is shown sitting over a grass strewn throne in *Padmāsana*. The upper cornice of the pedestal is decorated with a zig-zag line, while the decoration on the oblong middle portion consists of a row of lotus flowers (*Fig.* II, 10). The other decorations usually found on the middle oblong portion of the pedestal as seen in the sculptures, include a

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row of triangular notches[24], incised opposite triangles[25], floral designs[26] etc. The parallel examples of this are met with at Amaravati and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa[27].

(b) *Throne with legs*

This type of throne is almost similar to the above described one, except for its lower appendage. In this case the lower base is provided with four legs instead of solid one as seen above. This type of throne is revealed in the panel[28] depiciting "presentation to the Buddha of a mango grove by the courtesan Āmrapālī". The furniture on which the Buddha is shown sitting, has four legs, presumably, fixed by the turnery technique[29]. The seat is covered with designed cloth and is provided with a rectangular stool (*Fig.*, II, 11 & 12).

(c) *Throne with or without arm-rests but having legs*

The throne of the king Śuddhodana, depicted in the panel[30] revealing, the interpretation of "Māyā's dream", illustrates this variety. It is just like a chair without arm-rests, having four legs which are carved in the shape of a pillar. The ends of the top bar of the back project out slightly and have round terminals. The top bar of the back and the sides of the throne are decorated with floral design (*Fig.*, III, 13). In another instance[31] a throne of similar kind with an addition of arm-rests occurs in the relief (*Fig.*, III, 14).

(d) *Throne having animal figures as supports*

A throne having lions as support can be seen in the panel[32] illustrating "Entreaty of gods on the Tushita heaven". The Bodhisattva is shown sitting over it. The thorne is provided with an elaborate baldachin. The roof of the baldachin is supported on tall pillars to the upper halves of which, winged Erotes or *Yakṣas* are clinging (*Fig.* III, 15) In another case[33] the throne has animal legs presumably of lion as is evident from its paws (*Fig.* III, 16).

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(e) *Lotus throne* (*Padmāsana*)

Invariably, the Buddha is shown in the relief sitting over lotus thrones[34]. At time, he appears sitting over the inverted lotus thrones[35]. Such throne gets its depiction in Sanchi reliefs. It may be identified as *Padmāsana*, enumerated in the *Mānasāra*[36].

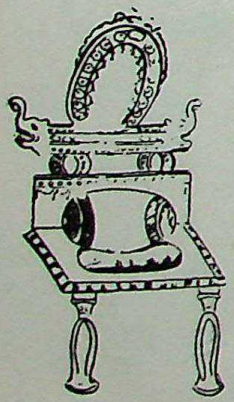
(f) *Vajrāsana* (*Diamond throne*)

The Gāndhāra reliefs depict this kind of thrones[37]. The word *Bodhi-maṇḍa* also means *Vajrāsana* or diamond throne, on which Buddha and his predecessors sat while attaining Bodhi or wisdom[38].

At Mathura depiction of the small thrones are quite interesting.

(a) *Throne having animal legs but without arm-rests*

In the Mathura sculptures the Buddha and the Tirtankaras are seen invariably provided with lion seats. Many of the Buddha and Tirtankara images sitting on these type of thrones have come to light. Most of them belong to 1st Cent. A.D. to 3rd Cent. A.D. In course of this period lions on the thrones have undergone several changes in their positions. In some cases, they are either sitting or standing enfaced. In some instances, they are standing with heads turned to right or left. In some other cases, they are shown sitting back to back.



An image of Vardhamāna discovered in Kankālī mound reveals an excellent example of throne having animal legs. The Vardhamāna is shown seated on a throne which has lion supports. The throne is devoid of arm-rests[39] (*Fig.* III, 17).

Three other images[40] of Vardhamāna discovered at the same place are shown occupying thrones having animal supports. The lions carved as support to the seat are two in numbers *Fig.* III, 18, *and* (*Fig. IV*, 19, 20). Another image of

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Vardhamāna[41] reveals a throne having animal supports. In this case, the throne is having, in addition, at the back of the seat lion terminals. As seen above the throne is devoid of any arm-rests.

Again, the statue of *Vima Kadphises* reveals him sitting on a lion throne. Two lions are seen as supports to the throne.[42] Elsewhere, the Bodhisattva is shown sitting on a lion throne.[43] The lions carved as support to the seat are three in number. In some cases, the Buddha is shown sitting on thrones which are having lions as support, but in this case lions are enfaced.[44] The Buddha's sculptures from Sithalaghati and Mahet also reveal him as seated on a lion throne. In this case also they are used as leg supports.

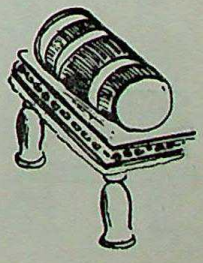
(b) *Throne having pillar shaped legs but devoid of arm-rests*

In one of the frieze slabs[45] discovered at Kankālī tīlā, this type of throne is depicted. A goat headed deity *Bhagava Nemeso* is shown sitting on a throne having *āmalaka* or pillar shaped legs. The throne has no arm-rests. The ends of the top bar of the back have arches (*Fig.* IV, 21).

(c) *Throne with raised pedestal and circular or rectangular surface or top*

In one of the sculptures discovered from Kankālī, tīlā this type of throne is revealed. Parsvināth is shown sitting over it. It has a rectangular platform raised over a circular pedestal[46] (*Fig.* IV, 22). Again, on one of the *āyagapaṭas*,[47] a throne with raised pedestal occurs. The throne has a circular top (*Fig.* IV, 23).

In Ajanta paintings the depiction of the small thrones are prolific and varied.



(a) *Throne with arms but devoid of back*

This type of throne gets depiction only once in the whole range of Ajanta paintings. The Saḍdanta Jātaka depicted in

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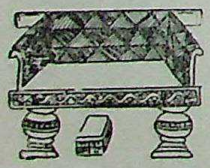
the paintings reveals this throne. The throne has no back. Its side-arms are decorated with floral designs.[48] As already pointed out these type of thrones are met with in the Gāndhāra reliefs and in the sculptures of Barhut and Sanchi and also in the terracottas of Kausambi. As such it appears to be a common furniture article in the early Indian sculptures.

(b) *Throne having legs and without arms*

This type of throne is very common at Ajanta. The one depicted in the Śibi Jātaka[49] is a throne of this type. It is rather a low throne mounted on squat, *ghaṭa*-shaped legs, six of which are seen in the front row. A broad band along the margin of the vertical back is studded with big round gems and diamonds alternately (*Fig.* IV, 24). Such thrones made of precious metal and profusely ornamented with gems are referred to as *ratnāsanas* in *Kādambarī*.[50] Earlier, Kālidāsa also describes a throne made of gold and studded with precious stones.[51] Later, Yuan Chawang makes a special note of the seats of kings and rich people which were profusely decorated with precious substances.[52]

Similar throne except for its square back is again met with in the painting revealing the scene of Śibi Jātaka. The king Śibi is seen sitting over a throne of this type.[53] It is a low throne mounted on legs. It has a square back instead of vertical one as seen above. A broad band along the margin of the square back is studded with big round gems and diamonds alternately (*Fig.* IV, 25). This may also represent *ratnāsana*.

The throne represented in the painting revealing Embassy scene[54] offers an interesting variety. It is mounted on a fluted legs, broadening at the base. The top bar of the back has *makara-mukha* terminals and is adorned with beaded patterns. The slanted arch-like projection above the back has a broad band along its margin which is decorated with rosettes and pearls ornamentation. A rectangular cushion is kept on the seat and a roll cushion is seen at the back (*Fig.* V, 26).



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Exactly similar example of this type of throne can be seen in the scene[55] revealing the "Birth of the Buddha". But in this case the arch projection above the ball is plain. The *makara-mukha* terminals are quite visible (*Fig.* V, 27).

A more elaborate type of throne and almost similar to the preceding example is illustrated in the painting[56] revealing "Buddha preaching". It has in addition a standing human figure on either side of the back (*Fig.* VI, 28). It is learnt from Appolloinius that the chief of Sophoi had a throne of bronze which was ornamented with golden images[57]. The Ajanta specimen may be one such.

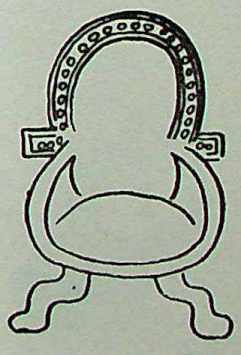
(c) *Throne with arched or curved back*

In the scene depicting[58] "exile of a lady" this type of throne is depicted. The seat is mounted on a pillar shaped or *āmalaka* shaped legs. The back of the throne is curved or arched. It has a chequer pattern on the exterior (*Fig.* VI, 29). A foot-stool (*pādapīṭha*) is provided. It has *Vaṅkapāda.* Further on the seat can be seen a cushion.

(d) *Throne with rectangular back*

This type of throne can be seen in the scene revealing[59] "Fainting of the queen at the sight of the Tusks". The throne has pillared shaped legs and has no arms. The ends of the top bar of the back are having arches. The rectangular shaped back has vertical band decorations (*Fig.* IV, *30*).

(e) *Throne having low side arms*



This kind of throne is met with in the scene[60] revealing "Rājā attending the summon of the saint". A saint is shown sitting over a throne of this type. It has a solid base with low side-arms with *makara-mukha* terminals at the back (*Fig.* VI, 31). It is interesting to note that the throne with arm-rests are rarely represented in the paintings. As such the present one offers an interesting example with its low arm

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sides. The thrones with arm-rests are commonly found in the early period. However, such thrones did not find favour in Vākāṭaka period as is evident from their sparse mural paintings.

(f) *Throne having animal supports or legs*

A throne of this kind is depicted in the panel[61] revealing "The Buddha in teaching attitude". It has prancing lions as supports for the seat and the curved back has the elephant supports above which are springing deer crowned by *makara-mukhas*. Above the embellished back is a semi circular projection superimposed by a *chhatra* (*Fig.* V, 32). A somewhat similar throne occurs in the painting revealing[62] "Buddha Teaching". In this case the *makara-mukhas* are replaced by peacocks (*Fig.* V, 33).

Another interesting variety of throne is met with in the paintings[63]. The throne has pillar shaped legs. A prancing deer is shown supporting the back on either side. By the side of the deer is a standing human figure on either side. The architrave of the back has *makara-mukha* terminals (*Fig.* VI, 34). Dhavalikar identifies this throne as the *mṛga-siṁhāsana*[64].

Thus, it can be seen the small thrones depicted in the sculptures of Barhut, Sanchi, Amaravati, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Mathura, Gāndhāra and in the paintings of Ajanta are varied and broadly they can be classified as (1) throne having solid lower base or legs but without arm-rests or back (2) throne with pillar shaped legs and side-arms but without back; (3) throne having pillared shaped or *amalaka* shaped legs with or without arm-rests; (4) thrones with lions as supports (sometimes as arm-rests also); (5) throne with raised pedestals.

The throne having solid lower base or legs but without arm-rests and back (*Fig.* II, 10 & 11) may represent *miḍhi*, mentioned in the *Cullavagga.*[65] The commentary on Vinaya[66]

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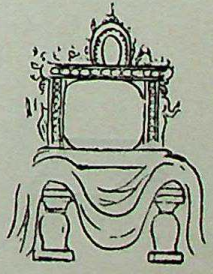
explains it as the *pīṭha-phalaka.* As is evident from the Gāndhāra sculptures, this *Āsana* throne is invariably, occupied by the Buddha. However, the parallel examples are met with at Amaravati[67] and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa.[68]

The thrones with pillar shaped legs and side-arms but without backs, confined only to early period as is evident from their depiction at Barhut, Sanchi and Gāndhāra (*Fig.* I, 1 and 5). It is scarcely present at Ajanta. This throne has Hellenistic influence and becomes a rare furniture article in the later period.

The thrones having pillar shaped or *āmalaka* shaped legs with or without arm-rests may represent the *pallaṅkas* mentioned in Pāli texts[69]. The word *Pallaṅka* (in pāli) means an embellished chair or a dignified chair and is synonymous with the Sanskrit word *Paryaṅka* or *Paryaṅkika*[70]. Ordinarily, the legs of the *Pallaṅkas* were composed of bulbous portions of one or more stepped pyramids. The *āmalaka vantikā pīṭhaṁ* mentioned in the Pāli texts is the chair which has legs of this type[71]. If there are no arms to the *Pallaṅkas*, they are known as *Addha-Pallaṅkas.* These thrones with or without arms but having pillar shaped legs persist through the early Indian sculptures since Sātavāhana period. However, the throne with or without arm-rests but having legs become very common in Vākāṭaka Gupta period as is evident from their frequent mural depicts and can be regarded as rich seats. Some of the thrones at Ajanta having vertical or square back (for example *Fig.* IV 24 & 25) are decked with pearls and diamonds[72] and these may probably represent ratnāsanas.



Similarly, the throne having animal figures (lions) as arm-rests or legs or both, may probably represnt *Simhāsanas.* In the *Rāyapaseṇiya Sutta* the different parts of the throne is enumerated[73]. The Pāli text informs that *Siṁhāsana* made of fig wood was used on the coronation day and other ceremonial occasions.

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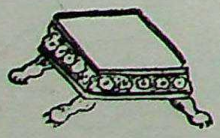
Generally, the lion thrones (*Siṁhāsanas*) are meant for the use of the deities and kings. According to Rajendralal Mitra[74] "the name of the throne *Siṁhāsana* is derived from the images of the lions (*Siṁha*) which originally formed its supports, but the secondary meaning of a state chair or throne, soon set aside the derivative meaning of a lion seat and such words as *pāda, padma-siṁhāsana,* (lotus-lion seat) *gaja siṁhāsana* (elephant-lion seat) got into currency from very early time".

Bharata in his *Nāṭyaśāstra*[75] prescribes the lion-seat to be used only by gods, kings and the chief queens. Kālidāsa in his Raghuvaṅśa[76] speaks of a *siṁhāsana* made of gold and decked with gems. Gopinatha Rao explains it as a four-legged seat, circular or rectangular in shape and one *hasta* or cubit in height. The four legs of this seat are made up of four small lions[77].

The *Yuktikalpataruvu,* the work of the later period while listing out the different varieties of furniture, speaks of *Siṁhāsana* of eight different varieties in accordance with the nature of the animal supports. It also mentions of the wood, a precious metal and stones that are to be used in the make of the *Siṁhāsana.* In fact *Yuktikalpatruvu* calls it *Siṁha-siṁhāsana.* It further states that this throne should be made of sandal wood (*Chandana*)[78]. The Chinese traveller Yuan Chwang[79] also speaks of *Sīṁhāsanas.* "The Sovereign dais", he observes, "is exceedingly wide and high and is dotted with small pearls". What is called lion-seat is covered with a fine cloth and mounted by a jewelled foot-stool.



However, it is interesting to note that the *Siṁhāsanas* have a fairly wide distribution in India during the early period. The two stone figures of griffins found at Patna (3rd-2nd Cent. B.C.) have been identified by Stuart Piggot as a supports of a throne of the Mauryan Emperors[80]. Their wide-spread distribution in early Persia had led Piggot to trace their origin to western Asia[81]. This view has to be

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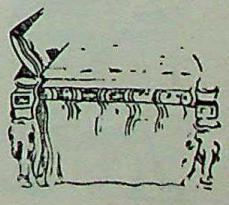
accepted in the light of Persian influence on the imperial Mauryan art.[82] Later, *Siṁhāsanas* gained their popularity in the subsequent centuries of the Christian era as is evident from their frequent depictions in the sculpture of Amaravati, Nāgārjunkoṇḍa, Mathura etc.

However, the lion motif appears to be one of the most ancient decorative symbols, probably, typifying the royal nature of the furniture of early people. In Egypt, only lion paws and heads alone were used as terminal decorations. In Gothic representations, they appear more often as grotesque or in heraldic shapes.

(ii) LARGE THRONES

The depiction of the large thrones or more precisely *sofas*[83] in the early Indian art appears to be rather sparse or almost nil. It is interesting to note that the sculptures of Barhut, Sanchi, Gāndhāra (except for a solitary representation) and the early sculptures of Amaravati do not reveal any large thrones. Evidently, these large thrones did not gain favour in the early period. However, the popularity of these thrones can be seen in the later period of Amaravati and at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa as is evident from their profuse depictions. Again its popularity seems to have been dwindled at Mathura and Ajanta as is evident from its solitary representation at each place. It is quite likely therefore that the large thrones appear to be essentially the contribution of the later Sātavahanas and the Ikshvākus in the 2nd-3rd Cent. A.D. to the furniture articles.

The large thrones revealed in the sculptures display almost all the varieties found in the small thrones. They are no way different from the smaller thrones except that they provide accommodation for two or three persons. A *sofa* is generally understood to be a long upholstered seat for two or more persons. The variety that can be visualised in the sculptures comprises (1) throne having solid lower structure



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but devoid of arm-rests, (2) throne having solid base and arm-rests, (3) throne having legs but without arm-rests, (4) throne having legs and arm-rests, (5) throne without a back-rest.

The Amaravati sculptures of the later period reveal interesting varieties of large thrones. They are invariably seen occupied by kings and queens.

(a) *Throne having solid lower structure but devoid of arms*

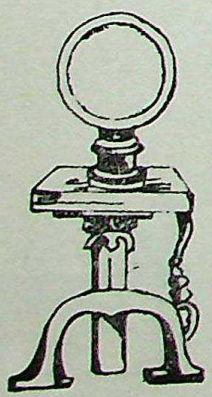
This kind of throne is well represented in the reliefs. The panel[84] revealing the Jātaka of the *Nāga Champaka* illustrates a throne of this type. A Nāga king along with other members is shown to have occupied this throne, in which each has his leg resting on a foot-stool kept in front of the throne. The terminals of the projected top bar reveal *makara-mukhas* (*Fig.* VII. 1).

(b) *Throne having legs and without arm-rests*

This type of throne occurs at Amaravati. The top bar of the back of this throne contains plain terminals. It has pillar shaped legs[85] (*Fig.* VII, 2).

(c) *Throne having legs and arm-rests*

A fine example of this kind is illustrated in the panel depicting "*Māndhātu Jātaka*".[86] The arm-rests and the back of the thrones are carved with chequer pattern. A wavy line and a row of lotus design decorate the front portion of the throne. The arm-rests of the throne are excurved. The throne has *āmalaka* shaped legs (*Fig.* VII, 3).



Another example of this variety is revealed in the panel[87] depicting "Nanda and his beautiful wife Janapada Kalyāṇi". In this case, top bar of the back is plain. The arm-rest and the back are decorated with vertical lines intercepted with horizontal line. The throne has *āmalaka* shaped legs. It is provided with a foot-stool (*Fig.* VII, 4).

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(d) *Throne without back-rest*

This type of throne is carved on one of the rail pillars[88] of the Amaravati. The throne has neither arm-rests nor back but a solid base. The solid base is decorated with a beaded pattern. This long seat which is bigger than the normal seat and smaller than the bed-stead is very convenient for relaxing. However, two persons are shown occupying this throne (*Fig.* VII. 5).

At Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, the representation of the large thrones are prolific. Invariably, they are found in the sculptures occupied by a king and a queen or by the members of the royal family thereby indicating their exclusive use by the royalty.

(a) *Throne having solid lower structure but devoid of arm-rest*

A fine example of this variety comes from a pilaster:[89] a king and a queen are shown sitting on this type of throne. The sides of the back-rest of the throne are decorated with beaded pattern while the middle oblong of its solid base contains a criss-cross design. A cushion is seen placed on the throne.

Sometimes, these large thrones even accommodated three persons. Thus, in an unidentified panel[90] a throne providing space for three persons is illustrated (*Fig.* VIII. 6). A king and two of his queens are shown occupying this throne. The terminals of the projected top-bar are supported by rampant figures, probably lions. The sides of the back of the throne and the middle portion of its solid base contain vertical rows of beaded pattern. The lower cornice of the pedestal is again carved with an ornamental decoration. The king is seen resting his right leg on the foot-stool provided in front of the throne.

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(b) *Throne having solid base and arm-rests*

In the panel[91] depicting "Māndhātu Jātaka" a throne of this kind is represented. The king Māndhātu and his queen are the occupants of this throne. The dying monarch, Māndhātu is shown with his legs completely stretched on the throne, while his queen, who is supporting him is having her right leg resting on the high foot-stool kept in front. The top-bar supported by the arches contains a wavy line design while the back of the throne is plain. The throne has rounded arm-rests which are embellished with beaded pattern. The upper cornice of its solid base is also carved with a similar design (*Fig.* VIII. 7).

Another example of this throne occurs on an ornate pillar.[92] A king and queen are shown occupying it. As the seat of the throne is very low, no foot-stool for this throne is provided and the king is seen having his left leg on the floor. The top-bar of the throne and the plain, solid lower-structure are clearly visible.

(c) *Throne having legs but without arm-rests*

A solitary example of this variety comes from the panel illustrating "Māndhātu Jātaka". The king Māndhātu attended by his two queens is shown occupying this throne. The projected top-bar of the back appears to contain slightly projected *makara-mukha* terminals. The top-bar and the sides of the back are decorated with a row of beaded pattern while the seat edge is carved with a row of circlets. This throne has *āmalaka* shaped legs[93] which answers well the *āmalaka vantikā pīṭham* as mentioned in the Pāli texts. A foot-stool which is provided in front of the throne is utilized for different purpose. In this case a tray is seen kept over it.

(d) *Throne having legs and arm-rests*

A fine example of this kind is illustrated in the panel[94] depicting "Māndhātu Jātaka." The ends of the projected

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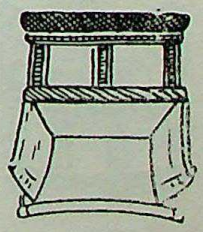
top-bar of its back are supported by arches. The top-bar is decorated with criss-cross design. The arm-rests of the throne are incurved and decorated with beaded pattern. The throne has *āmalaka* shaped legs (*Fig.* VIII, 8). A rectangular foot-stool is seen provided in front of the throne on which the queen is resting her crossed legs.

(c) *Throne without a back*

A fine example of this variety occurs in the panel[95] illustrating "Sagata and the nāga of the Mango ferry." The Buddha is shown sitting in the *Padmāsana* posture over this throne. The decoration on the solid lower-structure of the pedestal is elaborate and consists of a panel of lotus design separated by a vertical row of beads. No foot-stool is provided in this case.

A slightly different fashion of this variety is seen carved on an inscribed pillar[96] discovered near stūpa no. 9. It is a long bench supported by a two vertical uprights. A rectangular foot-stool is also provided for this throne (*Āsana*).

At Gāndhāra, significantly, the depiction of the large throne is sparse. There is only a solitary representation of a large throne in the relief. It reveals that this type of throne did not gain favour among Gāndhāranese. The panel[97] illustrating "The Faithful Amarā" represents king and his queen, occupying such a throne. As the representation of the throne is very rough the details are not clear. However, one can make out its solid lower structure. The throne has no arms but has back (*Fig.* VIII, 9). The king is shown resting his right hand on the back of the *sofa* while his left leg is resting on a foot-stool provided to the throne.



At Mathura again, the depiction of large throne is scanty indicating thereby its non-popularity in that region. There is only single representation of what appears to be a large throne. A fragment of a *toraṇa* pillar[98] erected by Balahastina

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(at Kankāli tilā) reveals a throne on which two persons (male and female) are shown seated. The throne looks like a long bench supported by two vertical uprights (*Fig.* VIII, 10).

At Ajanta also this throne did not find favour. There is only one representation[99] of this throne (*Fig.* VIII, 11). It is larger than normal seat but smaller than a bed and is useful only for relaxing. It has a thick, rectangular top mounted on four short, bell-shaped legs. Its sides are decorated with a running floral scroll, probably engraved. On the left are seen two roll cushions, one above the other.

These large thrones or *sofas* with solid structure or with legs and with or without arm-rests but with backs can be identified as *āsandīs*. In a Buddhist literature[100] it is referred frequently to mean a long seat. The *Dīgha Nikāya* considers it as a long seat that can take more than one person. The commentary on *Theragāthā* defines the *āsandī* as a long-legged-four-cornered chair upon which it is possible to sit but not to lie.[101] The monks it appears were forbidden either to sit or lie on an *Āsandī*, *Pallaṅka* and *Tūlikā*.[102] This *Āsandī* type of a seat is said to have been prohibited for use by Gautama.[103] But the monks were allowed to use an *Āsandī* if its legs were either cut down or broken[104] (*bhinditvā*). *Paḍīsijjā* (sofa) is included among marriage gifts in the Jain literature.[105]

The long seats with solid base or with legs but without back-rest may represent the *mīḍhis* mentioned in *Cullavagga*.[106] The commentary on Vinaya explains it as the *pīṭha-pahalaka*.[107]

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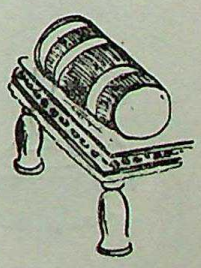

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Pl. 82, fig. 117; Pl. 83, fig. 118; and Herald Ingholt, *Gandhāran Art in Pakistan*, (New York, 1967), 126, 177.

23. Marshall, *Op. cit.*, Pl. 53, fig. 77.
24. Marshall, *Op. cit.*, Pl. 57, fig. 84.
25. *Ibid.*, Pl. 83, fig. 118.
26. *Ibid.*, Pl. 54, fig. 77.
27. Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, P. 72.
28. Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, P. 72.
29. The chief novelty introduction by the Greeks was the wide spread use of turnery after 6th Cent. B.C. The art of turning on the lathe was probably developed ln the wood-producing areas of the Middle-East whence it spread slowly to the Greek main-land. In the latter Hellenistic period, turning was introduced into Egypt and other parts of the Roman world. (Singer and others, *History of Technology*, Vol. II, Oxford, 1954, PP. 192 and 638).
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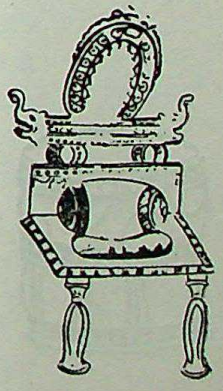
54. Yazdani, *Op cit.*, Part-II, Pl. XIX.
55. Dhavalikar, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XVII.
56. *Ibid.*, P.95
57. Yazadani, *Op.cit.*, Part. II, Pl. XII.
58. *Ibid.*, Part. III, XXX.
59. *Ibid.*, Part I, Pl, XV.
60. Yazdani, *Op. cit.*, Part. III, Pl. XV.
61. Dhavalikar, *Op.cit.*, P. 92, Fig. XXV. 1.
62. *Ibid.*, P. 93, Fig. XXV, 3.
63. Dhavlikar, *Op. cit.*, P. 93.
64. *Cullavagga*, V.94, and VI, 2.4
65. *VA.*, 1216; *Vin.* ii, 43, *mīḍhi Vin.* text iii, 163 says that it is built against the outer wall of the house of hut. Made of hardened mud with two wooden legs in front. It is a bench used to sit or sleep on. In the *Rigveda* also the word *proṣṭha* to mean a bench has been mentioned (VII. 55-8).
66. Sivaramamurti, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XIV II-1; D. Barrett, *Amaravati Sculptures in British Museum*, (London, 1954), Pl. XII, XXXV.
67. Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, PP.158-159.
68. *BD.*, ii, 271, No.3, *Cullavagga*, 1, 8, VI, 14; *Mahāvagga*, V. 10.4
69. *Kādambarī*, P. 17; Kālidāsa refers to a word *Viṣṭara* which means a honoured seat worthy of a royal house.
70. *Vinaya texts*, iii, P. 165,; *Cullavagga*, VI, 2.4.
71. In literature, it is said that the rich seats, presented to Yudhiṣṭhira by some Eastern Indian king were inlaid with gold and ivory, and they are referred in the epics as *Āsanāni mahārhāṇi* (Motichandra, *Geographical and Economic Studies in the Mahābharata—Upāyana parva*, P. 73 and also Dhavalikar, *Op. cit.*, P.95).
72. *Rāyapaseṇiya Sutta*, *Koṇḍikā*, 42, P. 98.
73. Rajendra Lal Mitra, *Indo Aryans: Contribution towards the elucidation of their Ancient and Medieval History*, (Calcutta, 1881), 1, P. 250.
74. *Nātyaśāstra*, P. 235.
75. *Raghu*, VI. 1; XVII, 7; XIX, 57.
76. T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *The Hindu, Iconography*, Vol. 1, (Madras, 1914), Part 1, P. 21.
77. *Āsanayukti*, VS, 372-76.
78. Yuan Chwang, *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, P. 147.
79. Stuart Piggot, "*Throne Fragments from Pataliputra*", *AI* No.4, 1947-48, PP. 101-103.



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80. *AI*, No. 4, P.103.
81. Dhavalikar, *Op. cit.*, P. 93.
82. The modern name *sofa* is of Eastern origin and was first used in 1680 to designate a Diwan like seat in France. The same type had also been called *Canape*. It had a back and arms at each end but was distinct from the *settee* by its greater comfort (Aronson, Joseph, *The Encyclopaedia of Furniture*, London, 1966, P. 397).
83. Douglas Barrett, *Sculptures from Amaravati in the British Museum*, London, 1954, Pl. XXVII.
84. Sivaramamurti, *Op. cit.*, fig. 12, 8.
85. Douglas Barrett, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XXXVI.
86. Douglas Barrett, *Op. cit.*, XLIV.
87. *Ibid.*, Pl. XXVII.
88. Longhurst, *Op. cit.*, P. XXVI-a; Cf. *Gāndhāra*-Herald Ingholt, *Op. cit.*, Fig. 4, 11, 21.
89. *Ibid.*, Pl. XXVI-C.
90. Longhurst, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XXXIX-b; Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, P. 163.
91. Longhurst, *Op. cit.*, IX-6; Cf. Barett, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XII.
92. Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, (Nāgārjunakoṇḍa), *Fig.* XI, 7; *Vinaya* Texts, iii, P. 155,; *Cullavagga*, VI, 2, 4.
93. Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, fig. XI, 8.
94. Longhurst, *Op. cit.*. Pl. XLII-b.
95. Longhurst, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XLVIII-b.
96. *ASIAR* 1930-34, Pl. XXXIX-C.
97. Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, P. 74, fig. XVIII. 7; Herald Ingholt, *Op. cit.*, 4.
98. Vincent Smith, *Op. cit.*, Plate XXVII.
99. Dhavalikar, *Op. cit.*, P. 92, Fig. XXVI, 1, Pl. II.
100. *Dīgha Nikāya*, 11, 23; I.B. Horner, *The Book of the Discipline* iii, XLII, 1; *Mahāvagga*, V, 10, 3.4.5; *Cullavagga*, V.VI, 8; V.37; VI.8; VI. 14; VI. 141.1.
101. Commentary on *Theragāthā*, 1, 137.
102. *Vin.*, iii, 163 and also 142-143.
103. *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, i, 18, 1 and *Dīgha Nikāya*, i, 7.
104. *Vin.*, ii, 169-170.
105. Jagadish Chandra Jain, *Life in Ancient India as depicted in the Jain Canons*, (Bombay, 1947), P. 157.
106. *Cullavagga*, V. 94 and VI. 2.4.
107. *VA.* 1216; *Vin.* ii, 43 *mīḍhi*; *Vin.* text, iii, 163, says that it is built against the outer wall of the house of hut. Made of hardened mud with two wooden legs in front, it is a bench used to sit or sleep on.

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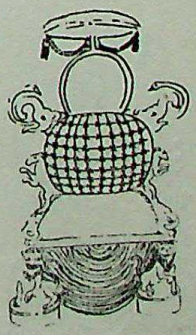
3

CHAIRS

Besides the smaller thrones described above (which resembles chairs) the early Indian sculptures also represent some other chairs of high workmanship. It is really surprising and delightful to find things exactly like the modern ones in the antiques of the remote past. The very fact that these chairs are seen represented in palace interiors shows that they were costly and pertained to royal furniture. Evidently, such chairs were meant for restricted and important use.

Generally, two varieties of chairs namely (1) a three-legged and high backed chair without any arm-rests and (ii) a high backed chair with arm-rests occur in the reliefs. It is interesting to note that the sculptures of Barhut, Sanchi, Gāndhāra, Mathura and the paintings of Ajanta do not reveal any three-legged chairs with high backs. They are present in the sculptures of Amaravati, Ghaṇṭaśāla and Nāgārjuna-koṇḍa. However, their depiction is prolific at Nāgārjuna-koṇḍa as compared to the other places.

At Amaravati their representation is sparse. These chairs have been depicted in the sculptures using them in different purpose. Here these are seen used for denoting the enlightenment of the Gautama for keeping *Svastika*. The variety of chair represented is the three-legged high backed chair with out arm-rests.



(1) *A three-legged and high backed chair without arm-rests*

A casing slab depicting "Buddha's enlightenment symbolised by the Bodhi tree"[1] reveals a chair of this kind. The

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chair has a circular seat-frame. Its high back is decorated with large oval shaped beads. The legs of the chair is curved (*vaṅka*)[2] and show the shape of a lion's leg. The ends of the legs are also curved in the form of lion's paw[3] (*Fig.* IX, 1). Parallel example of this we find at Ghaṇṭaśāla[4].

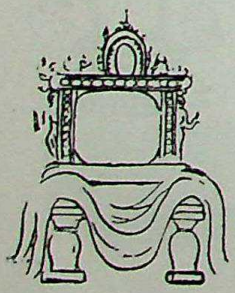
Another example of the chair but in slightly different manner occurs on a pillar.[5] In this case also the three-legged chair has circular seat-frame. The legs are curved and the ends of the legs are curved in the form of lion paws. But the back of the chair is not high as seen in the above case (*Fig.* IX, 2). But for this, the chair is exactly similar to the above one.

As already pointed out the representation of the three-legged chair at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa is profuse and they are all shown as royal furniture.

(i) *A three-legged, high backed chair without arm-rests*

This kind of furniture gets its representation in the reliefs four times. All the instances are nearly alike and distinct. The panel[6] illustrating "The Lady Amrā and the four wise men" depicts a chair of this kind. The chair is seen on the right-hand side of the king's throne. The lady Amarā is shown sitting over this chair.

This chair has a circular seat-frame which is decorated with row of large oval beads. A cushion (*bhisī*) is seen placed on the seat. The back of the chair in high and has two vertical bars with tops rounded and everted slightly. Both the vertical bars are connected by an arched top-bar. All these bars are decorated with a row of large oval beads. It cannot be ascertained whether there is any intermediate support between these bars. The chair has only three visible legs : the shafts of these are shaped like the legs of a lion (*Fig.* IX, 3). The leg ends are not, however, to be seen as they are covered by a female attendant and a dwarf sitting in front of the chair.



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A similar chair is represented twice in a panel[7] illustrating "Siddhārtha and the mighty bow." Both the chairs are seen occupied by females. In each case both have one leg on the foot-stool, provided in front of the chair; the other leg in both instances is kept akimbo. The two chairs are placed on either side of the king's throne. The one that is seen to the right hand side of the king's throne is very much akin to the one described above. The legs of this chair are curved (*vaṅka*) and show the shape of a lion's fore-leg very clearly. The ends of the legs are also carved in the form of lion's paws[8] (*Fig.* X, 4). We find the parallel examples of this type at Amaravati[9] and Ghaṇṭaśāla.[10]

The other chair which is to the left of the king's throne in the same panel is precisely similar to the one above.

Another panel[11] illustrating "night before the renunciation" shows a chair of similar variety. The circular seat-frame of this chair is decorated with a row of dots separated by oblique triple lines alternately. The other aspects of this chair are exactly similar as the ones described above.

(ii) *A high backed chair with arm-rests*

A solitary example of this variety is found in the panel[12] illustrating the "Ghaṭa Jātaka." The chair on which Devagabbhā is sitting has a high arched back with a full intermediate support which is decorated with bead-rows, lotus-flowers and rail pattern. The arm-rests are also decorated with the same pattern or design on the intermediate support. The lower portion of the panel is damaged, and as such, the leg portion of the chair is not available for scrutiny (*Fig.* IX, 5).

These chairs with high backs and arm-rests, may represent a kind of three legged *Pallaṅka* (*Paryaṅika* or *Paryaṅkika*) (a rich chair), while those with high backs and devoid of arm-rests may represent *Addha-pallaṅkas* with *vaṅkapādas*. As is evident from the sculptures of Nāgārjuna

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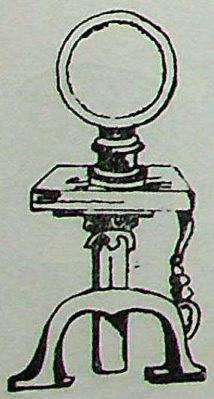
koṇḍa this chair appears to be exclusively meant for the use of the females. It is interesting to note that some what similar chairs with sloping or arched out backs known as *Cathedras* were used exclusively by women of the Roman period.[13]

In literature we get the word *pallaṅka* to mean a rich chair.[14] Four kinds of chairs[15] are mentioned, namely, a long one (*masāraka*), one with slots (*bhundikā baddha*), one with curved legs (*vaṅkapāda*) and one with removable legs (*āhaccapādaka*) besides these other chairs such as the rectangular chairs, plaited chairs (*baddhapīṭha*), a cloth chairs (*pīṭhikā*) sheep-footed chair (*Elakapādako*), straw chairs and wooden chairs (*Phalakapīṭha*) were also used.[16]

The jain literature[17] mentions chairs like swan chair, heron chair, eagle chair, tall chair (*oṇaya*), slopping chair (*paṇaya*), long chair, fine chair (*bhaddha*), winged chair (*Pakkha*), crocodile chair, lotus chair and *disāsovatthiya* chair. Similarly, Patañjali[18] refers to a soft chair (*mañcikā*). The chairs with back and arms or plain ones, like ordinary stools were different from those used by the noble class.[19]

Out side India the most familiar types of chairs were known in ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome in ivory, metal, stone and wood.[20] The well-known folding or 'X' type chair commonly found in Egyptian tombs was often carved with animal forms and covered with skin. The legs were more or less conventionalised animal feet. The lion paws and heads and other details persisted in all subsequent decoration.[21] Thus the Egyptian furniture has possibly become the basis of all later styles.



The golden age of Greece (1200-300 B.C.) has left scant remains of furniture but vase pictures and sculptures show many well developed types of beds, couches, chairs etc.[22] The chairs were gracious in outline with sweeping curves on legs and backs. The forms were often in bronze rather than wood suggesting Egyptian origin.[23]

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In Rome some chairs had specific significance. Thus 'X' chair had some implications of class. It appears, this chair was reserved for the use of magistrates and nobles on public occasions. The official chair of the Roman magistrate was always without back.[24] As already pointed out the *cathedra* was used exclusively by women. In the middle ages we find chairs like seden chair[25] and side chair.[26]

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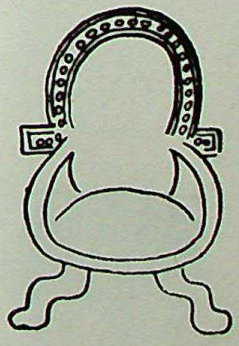
1. Sivaramamurti, *Op. cit.*, Pl, XXI, 1; Barrett, *Op. cit.*, Pl. VIII.
2. In *Vinayapiṭaka* (IV, 168; 169) chairs with curved and shaped like animal legs are mentioned.
3. Lion motif is one of the most ancient symbols. In Egypt lion paws and heads alone were terminal decorations. In the Golithic representations they appear more as grotesques or in heraldic shape. In Renaissance period also the lion's paw and head continued to be used un-interruptedly (Aronson, *Op. cit.*, P. 285).
4. Alexander Rea, *South Indian Bnddhist Antiquities, Arch. Sur. Ind.* New Imperial Series, XV, (Madras, 1894), Pl. XXVIII.
5. Sivaramamurti, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XXIV, 4 and Barrett, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XX.
6. Longhurst, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XXXVIII-a
7. *Ibid.*, Pl. XX-a
8. Aronson, *Op. cit.*, P. 285.
9. Sivaramamurti, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XXI-1, XXIV-4; Barrett, *Op. cit.*, P. 6, Pl. VIII and XX; Zimmer, Heinrich, *The Art of Indian Asia; Its Mythology and transformations* (New York, 1954), 88
10. Alexander Rea; *Op. cit.*, Pl. XXVIII.
11. *OHRJ*, Vol. XII (1964), No. 2. Pl. XXIV-3.
12. Longhurst, *Op. cit,*, Pl, XLVI-a.
13. Oskar Seyffert, *A Dictionary of Classical Antiquities*, (London, 1891), P. 127; vide also Aronson, *Op. cit.*, P. 83.
14. *BD.*, ii, 271, n. 3; *Cullavagga*, 1, 8, VI, 14; *Māhavagga*, Vol. 10.4
15. *Vin* IV, 168, 169 *Vbha* 356
16. *CU.*, VI, 2, 4; *VA.*, 1216, 1217; *BD*, 11; *VA*, 776.
17. J. C. Jain, *Life in Ancient India as depicted in the Jain canons*, (Bombay, 1947), p. 157.
18. IV. 1-3, P. 201, L. 3.



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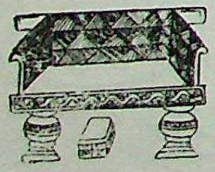
19. A. Cunningham, *The stūpa of Barhut,* (Varanasi, 1962), Pls. XXV. 3, XXVII. 12; XLVIII. 2.
20. Elephant tusks have been used for decorative purposes since prehistoric times. Its use in furniture for decorative features such as inlays, mounts, ornamental plaques etc., can be seen among others. The ancients left remains of much furniture in bronze and iron. Egypt, Assyria, Greece and Rome used bronze in the most magnificent way. In India, china, and Japan like wise brass, bronze and iron articles of great antiquity are found. Stone furniture was also not uncommon. (Aroson, *Op-cit.*, pp. 275, 290, 295).
21. *Ibid.*, (fig. 206). However, wood is probably the only material used most commonly and it appears that metals did not find favour with Indians as it did with ancient Greeks and Romans in the fashioning of furniture. This may just as well be due to the availability of excellent quality of wood within the country itself (Dhavalikar, *Op. cit.*, p. 101).
22. Aronson, *Op. Cit.*, fig. 205.
23. *Ibid.*. p. 249.
24. Seyffert, *Op cit.*, p. 127.
25. It is an enclosed portable chair borne on two long poles carried by two men. They appeared in Italy in middle ages (Aronson, *Op. cit.*, p. 378.)
26. Chair without arms and usually small. Early types were evolved by adding a back to a stool (Aronson, *Op. cit.*, p. 390).



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4

WHEELED FURNITURE

There are two instances of the representation of wheeled furniture in the whole range of Indian art. The representation of a wheeled chair and a wheeled brazier at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa and Ajanta respectively are the only examples of wheeled furniture.

(i) *Wheeled chair*

A solitary example of this variety occurs in the panel[1] illustrating 'king Kappina's ordination. This chair has a rectangular seat-frame standing on two wheels. A pillar (*bīṁbohaṇa*) is placed on the seat. The upper cornice of the seat-frame is decorated with rows of beaded pattern and criss-cross design while the lower cornice of the seat-frame is plain (*Fig.* IX, 6).

Pāṇini refers to wheeled chair called *parpa* used by the disabled person.[2] One who uses the *parpa* is called *parpika* apparently same as the *pīṭha Sarpī* of the *Vājasaneyī saṁhitā* (XXX.24) *Manu* (VIII.394) and the *Jātakas*. It is said that in Roman Period a chair with a sloping or arched out back was reseved for invalids.[3] Again, the sedan chair used in the middle ages perhaps was used for similar purpose. Probably, the utility of the chair depicted in the sculpture may be different from that known to *Pāṇini*. However, this type of furniture article getting its depiction in the sculptures of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa is unique and quite interesting.

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(ii) *Wheeled Brazier*

An extremely rare and unique article occurs in the later group painting of Ajanta.[4] The painting revealing *Matrpoṣaka jātaka* reveals a small cart consisting of a rectangular box-like body mounted on four small wheels. In the panel, it is shown containg eatables for the royal elephant who is none else but the Buddha. The cart depicted could be a wheeled brazier which was very much in use in the classical world. It was used for carrying food from kitchen to the dining room. Interestingly, movable braziers of Iron is reported to have been discovered in Taxila excavations. They are, according to Marshall, copied from the classical patterns.[5]

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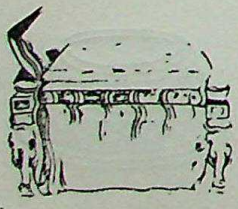
3. Seyffert, *Op cit.*, p. 127.
4. Dhavalikar, *Op. cit.*, p. 101.
5. Vol. II, p. 543; III. Pl. 163. Nos. 37.38.



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5

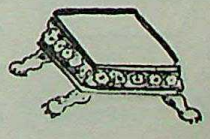
SEATS AND MORAS

The representations of seats and *Moras* in early Indian sculptures and paintings are many and varied. Some of them are so shaped as to resemble the modern ones very much. In some cases persons are provided with seats befitting to their social status. But the general tendency in plastic representations seems to be that no such convention as prescribing seats according to ones status has been strictly adhered to by the artist while illustrating the seats. For instance, the cane-seats or *moras* though primarily intended for holy persons like sages and brahmins are seen occupied by the princes, queens, ministers, female attendants etc., irrespective of their social status in the society. However, in their frequency of occurrence in the reliefs, the rectangular seats are scarcely depicted when compared to the occurrence of the circular cane-seats or *moras*.

However, the varieties of seats and *moras* represented in the plastic art comprise (i) rectangular seat with solid base (ii) rectangular seat with legs (iii) circular cane-seats or *moras* and (iv) stools.

At Barhut the representation of seats and *moras* are quite interesting.

(*i*) *Rectangular Seat with Solid base* :



A rectangular seat is illustrated in the sculpture[1] revealing *Kusa-Jātaka*. The seat has an appearance of a pedestal and probably was made of wood. It is richly decorated with

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chequer pattern. The upper and the lower cornices and the middle oblong portion of the seat-frame all contain chequer pattern (*Fig.* X, 1) A King is shown seated on it with his left leg dangling on the foot-rest provided to the seat.

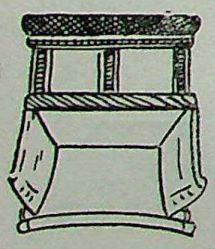
Precisely, similar example but with different decoration occurs on a pillar.[2] A rectangular seat with a *bodhi* tree is carved. The solid rectangular seat-frame contains the design of oblique slashes. But for this decoration the seat is similar to the above one (*Fig.* X, 2).

Again, a seat of similar kind occurs in the sculpture[3] revealing" the scene of tickling the nose of a giant by the monkeys". A giant is shown sitting over a solid seat. The lower-structure contains the design of a diamond in double lines (*Fig* XI, 3). A rectangular foot-stool is also provided to this seat for enabling the gaint to keep both his legs on it.

(*ii*) *A Rectangular seat with legs.*

This type of seat occurs on a pillar[4] revealing "Bodhi tree worship". A rectangular seat-frame is carved. It has pillar shaped legs. However, no foot stool is provided to it in this case (*Fig.* X, 4). Such kind of rectangular seats had their legs fixed in either of the two ways and were thus distinguished as *masārako* and *āhaccapādako*.[5] In the former type the mortice was cut into the leg, the tenon in the body. In the *āhaccapādako* the opposite was the case.[6] Sometimes, the supports of seats were removable.

(*iii*) *Cane-seats or moras* : *Vetrāsana*(*s*) :



The circular cane-seats or *moras* (*Vetrāsanas*) appear to be the most favoured item of furniture during the period under study. As is evident from the early Indian sculptures these seats have been used by all the classes of people irrespective of their social gradations. Thus the queens, princes, sages, ministers and female attendants appear in the reliefs sitting over the *moras*.

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These cane-seats are invariably seen mounted with cushions (*bhisis*). They are either lower or of medium height and at times contain very elaborate decoration. The cushioned cane-seats with their different shapes and designs must have accorded a pleasing appearance besides being comfortable to sit on.

At Barhut the panels[7] revealing the scene of *Mahākapi jātaka* illustrates an elaborate circular cane-seat or *mora*. It is of medium height and is decorated with criss-cross pattern in double lines (*Fig*. XII. 5).

In another sculpture illustrating the scene[8] of "a tree-spirit offering food to a good man" a cane-seat is revealed. It is a low cane-seat circular in shape and is decorated with zigzag lines. Over this a cushion stitched in criss-cross design is placed (*Fig*. XII, 6).

(*iv*) *Stools* :

The sculpture[9] revealing the scene of tickling the nose of a giant by the monkeys, a three-legged stool[10] (third leg can be presumed) is illustrated. A monkey is shown sitting over it. The three-legged stool has a rectangular top mounted on a curved legs (*vaṅkapādas*) (*Fig*, XII, 7).

Again, the sculpture[11] revealing '*vidhūrapaṇḍita jātaka*' illustrates a stool of different kind. It has a solid square base with circular top (*Fig*. XII, 8). Such type of stools are available even to this day,

Yet different type of stool is met with in the sculpture[12] illustrating the *Sūchi Jātaka*. It is a quite interesting low stool. It has an arched base surmounted by a rectangular top. (*Fig*. XII, 9).

At Sanchi however, we do not get the representation of any rectangular seat. The paucity of this type of seat at Sanchi can be explained by referring to the fact that the

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people at Sanchi were not in favour of this seat although contemporary people at Barhut and Amaravati favoured it.

(*i*) *Cane-seat or mora* (*Vetrāsana*):

The sculpture[13] representing 'Bodhi tree worship' reveals cane-seats. Naga female attendants are shown sitting over them. The cane-seat is of medium height and is decorated with two rows of criss-cross design. Over this is stitched a cushion, the stitching marking of which are clearly visible (*Fig.* XII, 10).

Again, on a North pillar of eastern gate way[14] are carved two cane-seats. One of them is elaborately decorated (*Fig.* XII, 11). It is of medium height and is decorated with a row of cross mark and wavy line in double lines, alternately. Over this, a cushion is stitched in chequer pattern. The other cane-seat[15] (*Fig.* XII, 12) is some what low height and is decorated with herring-bone pattern. A male person is shown sitting over this cane-seat with his right leg dangling. Elsewhere, another low cane-seat is met with in the Sanchi reliefs.[16] It is of low height and is decorated with a row of consecutive arches with a circular top (*Fig.* XII, 13).

At Amaravati, the depiction of seats and *moras* are prolific. The sculptures offer pleasing varieties of seats and *moras* there by indicating their popularity during the Sātavāhana period.

(i) *Rectangular seat with solid base*

A drum slab[17] revealing "the presentation of the child to the tutelary *Yakṣha* of the *Śakyas*" illustrates a seat of this kind. The tutelary *Yakṣha* is shown emerging out of this seat. The upper and the lower cornice and the middle oblong portion of the seat-frame-all contain beaded pattern (*Fig.* X. 14). Precisely similar rectangular seat but without any decoration on the solid base (*Fig.* XI, 15) occurs on a pilaster[18] revealing the scene of the first Sermon. The Buddha is shown sitting over it.

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Sometimes to these rectangular seats with solid bases backs are added[19] in which case they can be identified as *Addha-pallaṅkas* (*Fig.* X, 16). In the present case the seat is also provided with a foot-stool while the back of the seat has cushion.

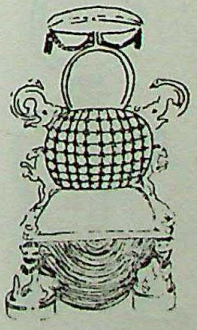
(ii) *Rectangular seat with legs*

This type of rectagular seat is illustrated in the scene[20] revealing "Śuddhodhana visiting Māyā in the Aśoka Grove". Māyā is shown sitting over it. The rectangular seat-frame is mounted on a pillar shaped legs. It has also side-arms (*Fig.* X, 17). A rectangular foot-stool is provided to this seat. The seat is covered with an animal skin (*goṇaka*) and provided with a round cushion at the back. This type of seat can be identified *mañca* seat with back and arms added.

Another example of this seat but without arm-rests occurs on the rail pillar.[21] This rectangular seat is mounted on pillar shaped legs. It has back but is devoid of any arm-rests. (*Fig.* XI, 18). However, the top bar of back of the seat is supported by animal figures. This seat can also be identified as *mañca* seat.

Another interesting type of rectangular seat gets its representation in Amaravati sculptures.[22] It is a low rectangular seat mounted on legs. It has neither back nor arm-rests (*Fig.* XI, 19).

(iii) *Cane-seats or moras* (*Vetrāsanas*)



At Amaravati the representation of the cane-seats is in profusion and offers a pleasing variety. These cane-seats were intended primarily for holy persons such as sages and Brāhmins. In the Amaravati sculptures, they are invariably used by the ministers, brāhmins and women.[23] Sometimes, queens also occupied this seat. Thus, it can be seen that this seat is not the monopoly of any particular section of people.

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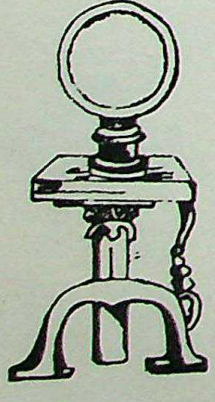
A cane-seat with elaborate decoration occurs in one of the sculptures at Amaravati.[24] The circular cane-seat is of medium height and is decorated with two rows of triangular notches with circlets as fillers. This two rows of triangular notches are divided by a row of beaded pattern. Over this is placed a cushion (*Fig.* XIII, 20).

In a panel[25] revealing "Interpretation of Māyā's dream" an elaborate circular cane-seat or *mora* is seen. It is of medium height and is decorated with a row of vertical uprights and wavy lines. The upper, middle and lower portion of the cane-seat is decorated with row of beaded pattern (*Fig.* XIII, 21). The queen Māyā is shown sitting over this. A rectangular foot-stool is provided to this cane-seat on which queen Māyā is placing both her legs.

In the same panel a similar cane-seat is depicted. In this case, a sage is shown sitting over it. The cane-seat is circular in shape and is decorated with a row of criss-cross design and oblique slashes. (*Fig.* XIII, 22). Bharata, in his *Nāṭyaśāstra* prescribes cane-seats for such persons.[26]

Another instance of a queen occupying a circular cane-seat occurs in the sculpture[27] revealing "Cakravarti and seven Jewels". The cane-seat is decorated with two rows of wavy lines intercepted by horizontal hands (*Fig.* XIII, 23).

In the panel[28] revealing "the interpretation of Māyā's dream", the prince Siddhārtha is shown sitting over a cane-seat. The cane-seat is of medium height and is decorated with a row of full blossomed lotus flowers (*Fig.* XIII. 24). Bharata, in his *Nāṭyaśāstra* prescribes *muṇḍā-seat* for the princes. Probably, the modern *mora* might be related to the word *muṇḍā* as both signify identical form and material.



Sometimes, these circular-seats are added with backs and arm-rests. Thus, the panel[29] revealing "Māndhātu jātaka" illustrates a circular cane-seat with back but devoid of any arm-rests (*Fig.* XIII. 25). A female attendant is shown

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occupying it. Again, precisely similar cane-seat occurs in the panel[30] revealing "Interpretation of Māyā's dream". The queen Māyā is shown occupying this seat. The cane-seat is circular in shape with a back added but devoid of any arm-rests. The ends of the arched top-bar is inverted and the lower solid base is decorated with floral design and a row of beaded and criss-cross design (*Fig.* XIII, 26).

An instance of a circular cane-seat with back and arm-rests occurs in the panel[31] revealing "the story of Udayana and Sāmāvatī". A snake is shown occupying it. The seat is a circular cane-seat with a back-added. It has arm-rests which have animal support (*Fig.* XIII, 27).

These circular cane-seats with the backs added and with or without arm-rests can be identified as *Vidalamañca* (seats of wicker work).

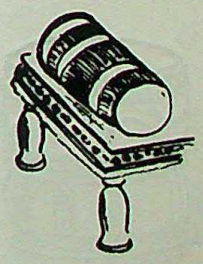
(*iv*) *Stool*

A three-legged stool with a circular top occurs in the panel[32] revealing "Birth of Buddha". The edge of the legs have animal paws, probably of lion (*Fig.* XIII, 28).

At Nāgārjunakoṇḍa representation of seats and *moras* are varied and offers a pleasing variety.

(*i*) *Rectangular seat*

A seat of this kind is illustrated in the panel[33] portraying "Māndhātu Jātaka". The seat has an appearance of a pedestal and probably was made of wood. It is richly decorated with a beaded pattern. The upper and lower cornices and the middle oblong portion of the seat-frame—all contain beaded patterns (*Fig.* XIII, 29). A brāhmin is seen sitting over the *āsana* befitting to his position. Bharata, in his *Nāṭyaśāstra*,[34] while laying down the rules prescribes a wooden seat for a brāhmin. This has been well answered in the Nāgarjunakonda sculptures.



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Sometimes, these rectangular seats are provided with backs as is evident from the āsana carved on the inscribed frieze slab.[35] The prince Yasodharā is shown sitting over this seat with her right leg dangling while her left leg is kept akimbo. The seat-frame is decorated with a beaded pattern and vertical lines. The top-bar of the seat is distinctly seen (*Fig.* XIII, 30). Evidently, the small thrones, with solid lower structures, were developed from these seats.[36]

(ii) *Cane-seats or moras* (*Vetrāsanas*)

The circular cane-seats appear to be the most favoured item of furniture during the Ikshvāku period. As is evident from the sculptures these seats have been used by all the classess of people irrespective of their social positions.

In the panel[37] illustrating "The casting of the horoscope" an elaborate circular cane-seat or *mora* is seen. It is of medium height and is decorated with rows of oblique slashes, the criss-cross and chain designs. Over this, a cushion stitched in the *āmalaka* fashion is placed. The qneen Māyā is shown sitting over this *mora* with her two legs resting on a foot-stool (*pādapīṭha*). This is the only instance where a queen is shown sitting over a circular cane-seat to which a foot-stool isprovided.

In the same panel a similar cane-seat is depicted. In this case, a prince[38] is shown sitting over it. The cane-seat is circular in shape and is of medium height. It contains a deco ration which includes beaded pattern, criss-cross design and a row of circlets. Bharata in his *Nāṭyaśāstra* prescribes *muṇḍā* seats for the princes.[39]

The examples of elaborate cane-seats (*moras*) are, however met with in the panel[40] illustrating "Daśaratha Jātaka". The came-seat over which Rāma and Lakṣhmaṇa are shown seated exhibit fine workmanship. They contain decorations of beaded pattern and oblique lines (*Fig.* XIV, 31). The stitches on the cushions run in single or double lines.

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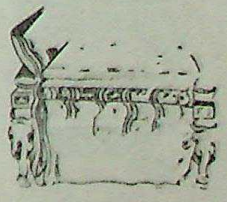
The sages were honoured by providing cane-seats or *moras* as can be known from some of the Nāgārjunakoṇḍa reliefs. This panel[41] illustrating "Asita's visit to Śuddhodhana" depicts a cane-seat occupied by the sage Asita. The cane-seat is circular and is of medium height, This is the second instance, in the whole range of reliefs, where a foot-stool is shown provided with a cane-seat.

In some cases the *moras* are shown used by the ministers. One unidentified panel[42] represents a minister sitting over a low cane-seat. It is interesting to note that Bharata prescribes cane-seats for the minister. The other class that used such *moras* very commonly was the attendant class.[43]

At times, these circular cane-seats are added with back-rests. A sculpture[44] revealing "the Buddhist Stūpa" illustrates a cane-seat with a back-rest (*Fig.* XIV 32). A *Pūrṇaghaṭa* is shown Placed over it. The back of the seat is made of cane (*Vetta*) or bamboo (*Velu*) and is known as *Vidalamañcaka.* Buddha ghosha explains it as a *Vettamañca.*

Bharata in his *Nāṭyaśāstra*[45] prescribes the *moras* to the persons according to their social status. Thus, the priests and ministers are to occupy the cane-seats. The sacrificer should sit on a *Vṛsi* (*Kuśa* grass seat) or a *muṇḍa* or on a cane-seat. In the Nāgarjunakoṇḍa sculptures, in some instances, such seats as are in conformity with the rules enjoined in Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* are provided.

At Gāndhāra the depiction of the seats and *moras* are profuse. In some cases, persons are provided with seats befitting their status. However, this convention is not strictly adhered to, as a rule, in all the cases. For instance, the can-seats or *moras* generally prescribed for the sages or ascetics, sometimes appear as seats intended for princes and queens despite their distinguishable social status in the society.



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(*a*) *Rectangular seat with solid base*

The panel[46] illustrating the "First Sermon" reveals as many as five rectangular seats, occupied by ascetics. Their seats are low in height, as compared to that of their master, the Buddha. All the five rectangular seats with solid base are shown strewn with grass. These seats may well answer the *māncas* mentioned in the Buddhist literature.

Sometimes to these rectangular seats, backs are added. It can be known from the panel[47] illustrating "Sleeping Woman". The seat has a solid base with a high dack added. The lower structure is decorated elaborately (*Fig.* XI, 33). A woman is shown sitting cross-legged and arm-bent to support her drooping head.

(*b*) *Cane-seats or moras* (*Vetrāsanas*)

This item of furniture appears to have been favoured much by the Gāndhārians. In the panel[48] illustrating "The interpretation of Māyā's dream" an elaborate circular cane-seat is seen occupied by the sage Asita and prince Siddhārtha, The cane-seats are of medium height and are decorated with a row of arches. Over this a cushion is stitched in single line, the "*V*" marks of which are clearly seen in the sculpture *Fig.* XIV, 34).

Similarly, we find, queen Yashodhara[49] and brāhmins[50] occupying these cane-seats. In the case of the seat of the Brāhmin, it is plain and devoid of any cushion. At times, these circular cane-seats are added with backs. Thus, the sculpture, depicting[51] "Miracle of Sravasti", illustrates, a cane-seat with a back. A prince is shown sitting over this.

(c) *Tripod*

The panel[52] illustrating" Bath of the Infant "Buddha" depicts a tripod or three-legged stool on which the infant Buddha is made to take bath. The tripod is having curved animal feet (*Vaṅkapāda*) (*Fig.* XIV. 35). It reveals the

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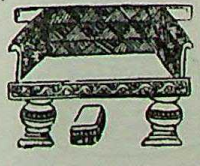
Hellenistic origin. However, such stands did exist in Egypt, in a modest form as altars, but had never found favour in Greece. The present example might have been the introduction of the Greeks in the Gāndhāra region. Later in Roman period, these miniature tripods developed into an elegant tripod in metal.

At Mathura the depiction of rectangular seats are almost absent. Even the cane-seats occur rarely. The paucity of rectangular seats and cane-seats at Mathura indicate the dwindling of their popularity in that region. However, the sculpture at Kankāli tilā[53] revealing dance scene illustrates three cane-seats. They are occupied by two female singers and a female harpist. One of the cane-seats occupied by a female singer is low seat with decoration containing chain, triangular notch and chevrons (*Fig.* XIV.36). The other one is again a low cane-seat with wavy line decoration in double lines. Over this, cushion is stitched in criss-cross design *Fig.* XIV,37). The cane-seat occupied by a female harpist is again a very low seat with a flower decorotion in two rows (*Fig.* XIV, 38).

Again, another sculpture[54] from Kankālī tīlā offers two cane-seats over which two male persons are shown sitting. Interestingly, a common foot-stool is provided for these two cane-seats (*Fig.* XIV. 39.) The cane-seats are of medium height and decorated with rows of triangular notches and wavy lines.

At Ajanta, the depiction of rectangular seats and cane seats as compared to Amaravati and Nāgārjunakoṇda are less and one can see the popularity of these seats on the wane distinctly. Probably, these were replaced by rich seats (i.e.) *Pallaṅkas* and *Addhapallaṅkas* as is known from the mural depicitions.



(i) *Rectangular seats with legs*

This type of seat is represented in the painting[55] illustrating "Vidhurapaṇdita Jātaka". A queen is shown sitting

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over this seat. The rectangular seat has pillar shaped legs. It has neither arm-rests nor the back (Fig. XI, 40).

Another painting[56] revealing "dying princes" illustrates a rectangular low seat. It has a rectangular top mounted on thick bell-shaped legs. The seat has a curved back (*Fig.* X, 41). Another painting revealing Hamsa jātaka illustrates a rectangular low seat.[57] It is precisely similar to the above one except with the back. In the present case it has a concave back similar to that of European chairs of the medieval period (*Fig.* X, 42.)

These seats resemble the modern *chowki* used in the north India today. However, the simplest seat of later period is a rectangular block possibly of wooden (*Fig.* XIV, 43.)[58] Hermits are seen usually seated on such seats. I-Tsing informs that such blocks of wood were widely used by ascetics, more especially by junior members of the Buddhist order, at the time of taking meals.[59] Interestingly, such blocks of wood are still used in South India for taking food and in Telugu it is known as "*Pīṭa*".

(ii) *Cane-seats or moras*

The Ajanta murals of the early period reveal the prevalence of cane-seats. Thus in one of the paintings[60], an elaborate cane-seat is revealed. It is of medium height and is decorated with a row of wavy line and flower design (*Fig.* XIV, 44.). Again, in the painting revealing Saddanta jātaka,[61] a cylindrical cane-seat is depicted. It appears to have been constructed in diminishing tiers. It is divided into two zones by a broad, horizontal band in the middle. The upper zone is divided into triangular compartments each containing trefoil motif. The zone has a running chevron band interwoven with '*Y*" and inverted "*Y*" patterns.

It is evident from the study of the mural paintings at Ajanta that cylindrical cane-seats were in vogue in the earlier period and they were outmoded in the later period

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when wooden seats with short legs and sometimes with back came into common use.

The rectangular seats with solid base or with legs representing *mañca* seats of the Buddhist literature are present at Barhut, Amaravati, Nāgārjunakonda, Gāndhāra and at Ajanta. They are almost absent at Sanchi and Mathura, and their absence in all probability could have been due to their non-adoption by the locals of those regions. However, the depiction of rectangular seats are comparatively less to these of cane seats. Sometimes to these *mañca* seats backs were added.

The cane-seats which can be identified as *Vetrāsanas* persisted in the sculptures of Sanchi, Barhut, Amaravati, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Gāndhāra, Mathura and Ajanta. However, at Ajanta, they are in profusion in early period but wanes in the later period to give place to rectangular seats. Parallel examples of these cane-seats can also be seen at Goli, in the caves of Bhaja, Badami (Cave-1) and on the ivories from Begram datable to 2nd-3rd centuries A.D.[62]

In the Buddhist literature seats made of khus-khus, *muñja* and reeds are mentioned.[63] The *Mahāvagga*[64] refers to the word *Kochcha* which means a cane bottomed chair. Kālidāsa in his *Kumāra Saṁbhava* refers to a seat (*vetrāsana*) of similar kind[65].

The three-legged stool however do not have frequent depictions. They are present at Barhut, Amaravati and Gāndhāra. The Gāndhāra specimen reveals Hellenistic origin.

The Egyptian stools, or seats were X—shaped or solid framed. The Greeks and Romans used stools resembling ancient Egyptian ones. Stools or seats without backs were also used by mechanics, soldiers and boys at school in the Roman period[66]. The earlier Etruscans used tub-shaped

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chair.[67] Evidently, this seems to have been developed from a stool or seat. Similarly, the curule chair of the Romans and the side chair of the middle ages were again developed stools. The side chair developed from the stool by the addition of the back. "Stool and forms"[68] says Aronson "were thus slowly pushed down the social scale until they were either completely rustic or in more elegant surroundings, only for ornamental or longing purposes."

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3. *Ibid*, Pl. XCVII, No. 148 c.
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5. *Vinaya* Texts iii. P. 164, *Cullavagga*, VI. 2, 3.
6. Sivaramamurti, *Op cit.*, p. 137.
7. Barua, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XCI, 140.
8. Barua, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XCI, 140
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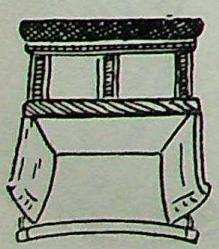
20. Barrett, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XXXII, 40; Sivaramamurti, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XII, 12.
21. Barrett, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XXVI, 81.
22. Sivaramamurti, *Op. cit.*, fig. XII, 16.
23. Sivaramamurti, *Op. cit.*, P. 138, Pl. 1, i, Fig. 1a; Pl. XXXV, fig. 2; Pl. XXXII, fig. 1a; Pl. XLI, fig. 1d; Pl. 1, fig. 2b;



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25. Barrett, *Op. cit.*, VII, 53.
26. *Nāṭyaśāstra*, P. 236.
27. Barrett, *Op. cit.*, VI, 54.
28. Barrett, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XLV, 90.
29. *Ibid.*, Pl. XXXVI, 36.
30. *Ibid.*, Pl. XLV, 90.
31. *Ibid.*, Pl. XXXIII, 37.
32. Barrett, *Op. cit.*, Pl. VII, 53.
33. Longhurst. *Op. cit.*, Pl. XXXIX-b;
    Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, P.168, Fig.XI, 13.
34. *Nāṭyaśāstra*, P.236.
35. *IAR.*, 1956-57; Pl.LVII-A, Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, P.168, Fig. XI, 14.
36. Similarly, the Curule chair of the Roman period and the side chair of the middle ages were developed stools by the addition of the back (Seyffert, *Op. cit*:, P. 127 and Aronson, *Op. cit.*, P. 413).
37. Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, Fig. XI, 15 and Longhurst, *Op. cit.*, Pl.XX-a; Cf. Gāndhāra, Fig.93.
38. Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XXV.
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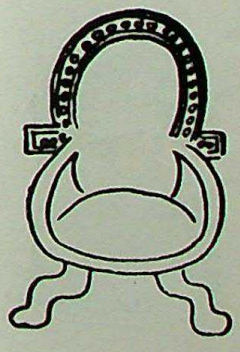

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61. Dhavilikar, *Op. cit.*, Fig. XXV. 9.
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63. *Cullavaggā*,, VI. 4.
64. *Mahāvagga*, 10.2
65. *Kumāra Sambhava*, can to VI, verse 43—vide also B.S. Upadhyaya *India in Kālidāsa*, Allahabad, 1947, P. 215.
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6

WICKER STANDS

The representation of the wicker stands[1] in the sculptures is rather sparse. Only in the sculptures of Amaravati and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa the wicker stands are depicted more than once. In the Barhut, Gandhara sculptures and in the painting of Ajanta they are almost absent. Even at Sanchi there is only a solitary representation.[1]

At Sanchi on a western pillar[2] a wicker stand is illustrated. Some eatables are seen kept over it. It is a circular stand made of cane and fashioned like a pair of truncated cone with their apieces together. (*Fig.* XV, 1).

At Amaravati the sculpture[3] reveals illustrations 'the interpretation of Māyā's dream, reveals two wicker stands in front of two guardian deities. They contain probably flowers over them. The wicker stands are made of cane and fashioned like a pair of truncated cones with their apieces together (*Fig.* XV, 3). Again, elsewhere[4] a wicker stand is depicted (*Fig.* XV, 3).

It appears during the Ikshvāku period the wicker stand was popular as is evident from the Nāgārjunakoṇḍa sculptures. The panel[5] illustrating the "the casting of the horoscope" represents three such wicker stands over which baskets are kept. The wicker stands are seen in alignment in front of the three guradian deities who are seated on a long bench. They are circular stands made of cane and fashioned like a pair of truncated cone with their apieces together (*Fig.* XV, 4). A stūpa slab (No. 219) also represents a wicker stand over which a relic casket is put (*Fig.* XV, 5).

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Again, in a village scene[6] it is shown placed before a hut indicating thereby its usage by the poor class. Since no vessel is to be seen on it, it might presumably have been used as a seat also.

These wicker stands can be identified as *Paṭṭakaṇḍolikas*. In the Cullaavagga[7] they were termed as *Paṭṭakaṇḍolikas* and monks were allowed to keep their books on wicker stands. The wicker stands are also said to have been used for serving food when they had wooden tops. Such of them may be identified with *bhojana phalakas* of Buddhaghasha.[8]

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1. The term *wicker* according to Aronson is generally used for furniture woven of various natural or synthetic materials such as willow, reed, rattan or spirarlly twisted paper (Aronson, *op. cit.*, P. 49).
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3. Barrett, *Op. cit.*, Pl. LXV (90).
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5. Longhurst, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XX-a; Cf. Sivaramamurti, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XII, fig. 17; Barrett, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XLV; Cf. *JISO*, vol. XVI, (1948), Pl. IV-d; VIII No. 57, 59; Cf. Mathura specimens at the British Museum.
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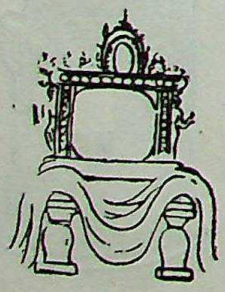
7. *Cullavagga*, iii, p. 86, V. 9, 4; Sivaramamurti, *Op. cit.*, P. 138.
8. *Vinaya texts*, iii, P. 165; *Cullavagga*, VI, 2, 4 foot-note 7.



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TABLES

The depiction of tables in the early Indian sculptures is quite rare. Representation of them we get only in the Gāndhāra sculptures and the murals of Ajanta.

At Gāndhāra, the relief[1] illustrating "Buddha and the monks in the house of Śrīgupta" reveals an "X" shaped table (*Fig.* XVI, 6). Buddha is shown using it as eating table. This appears to be of Greek origin and seemed to have been introduced by the Greeks to the Gāndhārians. The Greeks should have in turn borrowed them from Egyptians.

Again, an interesting table is represented in the panel[2] illustrating "enticement scene". The bride Nandā is shown being toileted. The Prāsādikā is arranging her coiffure, while herself adjusting it by looking in the mirror. A mirror and a small casket probably containing scented oil are seen kept on the tripod (*Fig.* VI, 7). This tripod appears to be again of Greek origin and may somewhat resemble the ornamental table *dephica*[3] (in the form of a tripod with a round top). But, in the present case, it is a square top.

It is interesting to note that the Greek's costly table *monopodid* or *orbes* was resting on one leg with a wooden top cut out of a single log in the whole of its diameter.[4] It is quite likely that the present example was developed from this.

At Ajanta the depiction of tables are quite interesting and impressive. In the Vesvantara jātaka[5] a hermit is shown

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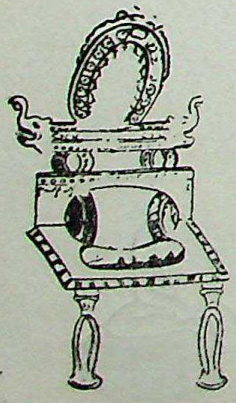
reading a book kept on a table (*Fig.* XVI, 8). The table resembles the modern one. It has a rectangular top mounted on two sets of legs, each pivoting medially on the other. Its thin or slender legs are possibly of metal. Such tables were very common in the Roman world and one of the finest examples richly carved and decorated and is dated to 1st cent. A.D.[6] is reported from Pompeii. It is therefore quite reasonable to deduce that this type found its way into India through the Greeco-Roman world and continued to be used though rarely, till 5th-6th centuries A.D. as is evident from its representation at Ajanta and Ellora.

Another most interesting table gets its depiction in the conception scene.[7] It has a thick round top, mounted on a cylindrical shaft with its sides tapering downwards. The shaft is so broad near its junction with the top that it is only slightly less in diameter than that of the top. The shaft, in its turn, rests on a pedestal consisting of two rings, the one at the base being bigger. The shaft is too thick to be solid; it can be hollow within. The most noteworthy feature of this is a slit provided in the margin of its top, through which is suspended a high necked pot which, may be an oil bottle[8] *Fig* XVI, 9). There are also some caskets, possibly contaning cosmetics and trinkets, on the table. Evidently, the table should have served as a dressing table.



Another, variety[9] of table is a low dining table (*Fig.* XVI, 10), It has an oval top mounted on four curved legs which resemble those of an animal. It is interesting to recall that Athenaues refers to similar dining table of the Mauryan emperor Chandra Gupta. Drawing largely on Megasthenese, he states that "a table like tripod is set before each person. There is placed upon it a golden bowl into which they first put rice boiled as one would boil barley and they they add many dainties according to Indian recipes".[10]

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Such dinner tables are generally referred to as *bhojna-phalakas*.[11] It accommodated vessels to take food from and generally curved (*vaṅka*) animal legs (*kuḷīrapāda*).

As is known from the statement of Megasthenese, the antiquity of such table can be traced to 4th cent B.C. The Persians have been credited with the innovation of these articles. It is quite probable therefore, they (such table) came into India in the 5th cent. B.C. during the time of Persian invasion. This would explain its occurrence in India as early as 4th cent. B.C.[12]

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5. Dhavalikar, *Op. cit.*, P. 99, Pl. XVI.
6. Singer and others, *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, P. 224, Fig. 199.
7. Dhavalikar, *Op. cit.*, Fig. XXVI. 4
8. Dhavalikar, *Op. cit.*, P. 99.
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10. Majumdar, *Op. cit.*, P. 165.
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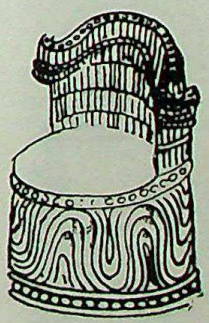

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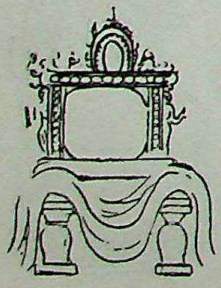
FOOT-STOOLS OR FOOT-RESTS (PĀDAPĪTHAS)

The foot-stools constituted an important article of furniture in Indian households. The Indian literature abounds with plentious references to them. The Indian sculptures represent considerable variety of them.

Foot-stools are generally provided to high thrones, though some exceptions to these occur in the reliefs. Small thrones, which are usually high and accommodating only one person are found invariably with a foot-stool in front of them. Evidently, the height of the throne necessitated the foot-stool. Only one foot-stool is found in front of each throne of this kind.

Large thrones, accommodating two or three persons were provided with foot-stools according to the number of the persons sitting on them. But this does not hold good in all the cases, for, we have instances of a single large foot-stool serving the purpose of two or three small foot-stools (*pādapīthas*) (Nāgārjunakoṇḍa sculptures, Longhurst, Pls. XLVII-a, XLII-b, XLVIII-a XXIII-a etc.,).



The foot-stools represented in the reliefs are either plain or ornate. Wherever decoration is present it comprises rail pattern, beaded pattern, or sometimes lotus-flower and line designs etc. By way of shapes, the foot-stools represented in the sculptures can be classified as rectangular, square, circular, oval and octogonal. Of them, the rectangular ones exceed in number; the square and circular or oval are less frequently represented. The octogonal one is rarely depicted.

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At Barhut the representations of the foot-stools (*pādapīṭha*) are less as compared to those at Amaravati, Nāgārjunkoṇḍa etc.

(i) *Rectangular-foot-stool*

The sculpture[1] revealing "Mahājanaka Jātaka" illustrates a rectangular foot-stool or *pādapīṭha*. It is placed before a small seat. A male person is shown sitting over the seat keeping both his legs on a rectangular foot-stool. The foot-stool is plain and devoid of any decoration.

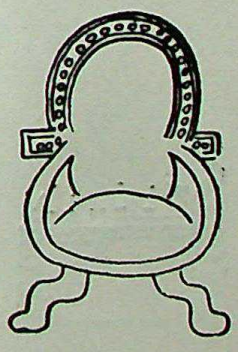
Another sculpture[2] illustrating the scene of "Kusa Jātaka" reveals a foot-stool, precisely similar to the above one. In the sculptures[3] revealing the sense of "tickling the nose of a giant by the monkeys" a rectangular foot-stool provided to a *manca* seat is illustrated. In this case also the foot-stool is plain.

As it can be seen from the sculptural depictions, only the rectangular foot-stool seem to have been favoured and they are invariably plain variety without any sort of decorations.

Again at Sanchi, the representation of foot-stools are rare.

(*i*) *Rectangular foot-stool*

The North pillar[4] of the Eastern gateway reveals a rectangular foot-stool. It is plain and devoid of any decoration. It is provided to a small throne. A king is shown seated over a throne with his left leg resting on the foot-stool.



On the middle lintel of the western Gateway[2] a rectangular foot-stool again gets its portrature. It is a plain one provided to serve as common foot-stool for a small throne and a *Vetrāsana*. The rectangular foot-stool is so spacious that it could accommodate the legs of a male and a female who are shown sitting over small throne and *Vetrāsana* respectively; face to face. Perhaps, this is the only instance

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in the whole of Sanchi reliefs where a common foot-stool is provided for a cane-seat and a small throne.

There are a number of foot-rests (*pādapīṭhas*) both ornate and plain in the sculptures from Amaravati. They are generally rectangular and are sometimes provided with cushions.

(i) Rectangular foot-stool

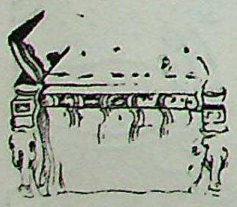
The sculpture[6] revealing the scene of "Enlightenment" illustrates a rectangular foot-stool. Again the sculpture[7] revealing "the interpretation of a dream" illustrates a rectangular foot-stool. It is provided to a small throne on which Śuddhodhana is shown sitting. He is keeping his right leg on the foot-stool.

The sculpture revealing[8] "Night before renunciation" illustrates a rectangular foot-stool provided commonly for two small thrones. The king Śuddhodhana and a female attendant are shown keeping their legs on the foot-stool.

An instance where a rectangular foot-stool provided for a *mañca* seat occurs in the panel[9] revealing "the interpretation of Māyā's dream". Sometimes, a rectangular foot stool is provided to the *āsandī* type throne is known from the panel[10] revealing "Māndhātu Jātaka". In this case, king Māndhātu is shown keeping his right leg on the foot-stool. The queen of Māndhatu also shared the foot-stool by keeping her right leg on it.

(ii) Square foot-stool

The panel[11] illustrating "the interpretation of Māyā's dream". reveals of square foot-stool. It is provided to a *Vetrāsana* on which queen Māyā is shown sitting. She is keeping her both legs on the foot-stool.



At Nāgārjunakoṇḍa representations of foot stools are varied. They are frequently depicted in the reliefs in associa-

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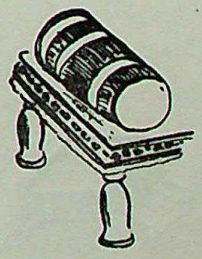
tion with small thrones, *āsandi* and occasionally with cane seats or *moras*.

(*i*) *Rectangular foot-stool*

A richly decorated rectangular foot-stool is found in the panel[12] illustrating "the Daśaratha Jātaka". It is placed before the throne of Daśaratha. Its upper and lower cornices and dado are decorated with beaded pattern. In this case the top of the foot-stool also contains four arches, in double lines and with four corners (*Fig.* XVII,1).

At times, these foot-stools had cushions placed over them. It is evident from the panel[13] illustrating "the Naga king Apalāla subdued by the Buddha". In this case also the foot stool is large and rectangular. The cushions (two) seen on it resemble the *maṇḍalāgrā bṛisī*. The foot-stool is sufficiently high to suit the *āsandī* and contains a beaded pattern on the lower cornice of its frame. The noteworthy feature of this foot-stool is that it contains cushion which is normally absent in other foot-stool.

A different type of the rectangular shaped foot-stool occurs in the panel[14] illustrating "Mandhātu Jātaka". It has legs and is placed before an *āsandī*. The foot-stool is seen occupying the whole length between the legs of the *āsandī*. It provides a place of rest for the feet of one of the queens of the king Māndhātu. Such foot-stools, though used in different ways, are available in Bengal and elsewhere. They are called *Jalachaukis* in Bengal and *Chaukis* in Uttar Pradesh. At *Srāddhas* and marriages such stools invariably form part of the consecrated gifts.[16]



A clear example of a rectangular foot-stool associating with a cane-seat comes from the panel[17] illustrating "Asita's visit to Śuddhodhana". It provides space for both the feet of the sage Asita who is sitting on the cane-seat. The foot-stool contains the usual decoration of the beaded pattern.

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(*ii*) *Circular foot-stool*

The panel[18] illustrating "Episodes in the career of the Buddha" depicts a foot-stool of circular shape decorated with beaded pattern (*Fig.* XVI. 2). In another instance[19] a circular foot-stool of this kind is depicted. In this case, it is decorated with a rope pattern. The top of the foot-stool is so fashioned as to slant to one side in order to give a comfortable footing.

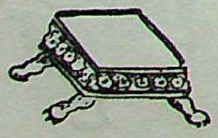
An interesting example of the foot-stool comes from the panel[20] illustratihg "the Daśaratha Jātaka". A circular foot-stool is seen associated with the throne on which Rama is sitting. The foot-stool is of considerable height to suit the high throne. Since the context of the story is in a forest, it is quite probable that the foot-stool may have been just an improvised one; it may just have been a boulder used like a foot-stool.

(iii) *Square foot-stool*

The square foot-stools are represented almost in equal proportion to the circular ones in the sculptures. Both ornate and plain varieties are available. These foot-stools are seen usually associated with either small thrones or the *āsandīs*.

An example of an ornate square shaped foot-stool comes from the panel[21] illustrating "the Conversion of the Yakṣha Ālavaka." It is decorated with a beaded pattern. Parallel examples of square shaped foot-stools associated with the thrones come from Amaravati[22] and Goli.[23]

A precisely similar foot-stool is met within the panel[24] illustrating "the Māndhātu Jātaka." It is placed before an *āsandī* occupied by the king Māndhātu and his queen. The queen is seen having her right leg on the square foot-stool; it is considerably high and suitable for *āsandī*. Its upper side and dado are decorated with a beaded pattern.



A clear example of a square foot-stool is found in the panel[25] illustrating the "lady Amarā and the four wisemen."

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This is considerably broad and is placed before the throne of the king of Banaras. It has accommodated one foot and contains a decoration of beaded pattern (*Fig* XVII, 3).

The *pādapīṭhas*, foot-stools, represented in the reliefs, are in majority of the cases rectangular.[26] However, a square foot-stool is also available in the reliefs.[27] There foot-stools appear to be simple blocks of wood, while at times, legs[28] are provided to them. In certain cases, foot-stools are decorated which include circlets with central dots, oblique slashes, bead pattern, palm-leaf design etc.

These foot-stools are generally seen, associated with thrones and occasionally with cane-seats. The representation of rectangular *pādapīṭhas* in majority evidently shows its popularity at Gāndhāra.

(i) *Rectangular foot-stool*

Several panels represent plain rectangular foot-stools which are possibly simple blocks of wood. However, decorated examples are not wanting. One such foot-stool[29] (*Fig.* XVII, 4) is decorated with floral pattern.

In the paintings[30] revealing "Siṁhala Avadāna" a rectangular foot-stool is depicted. In this case, it has two slanting legs possibly made of planks (*Fig.* XVII, 5). Yet another variety[31] (*Fig.* XVII, 6) has curved (*Vaṅka*) animal legs (*Kuḷīrapāda*) resembling tigers claws. The sides of its top bear some indistinct arabesque pattern.

(ii) *Circular foot-stool*

A plain circular foot-rest occurs from the painting revealing Saḍdanta Jātaka.[32] It resembles a stuffed cushion of considerable thickness.

(iii) *Oval shaped foot-stool*

A plain, oval foot-rest is represented in an early panel (Stūpa IX). In the later group of paintings we come across

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ornamented specimens of this class. An oval *pādapīṭha* in the Mahājanaka Jātaka (1) is fringed with pearls.[33] Another similar example (*Fig.* XVII, 7) has in addition lotus petal decoration on it. Yuan Chwang refers to Harṣha's *pādapīṭha* which is said to have been adorned with jewels.[34] It is probably these jewels to which the poetic fancy alludes in a Maitraka grant describing Kharagraha's foot-stool as "being covered with the lustre of the jewels of a hundred kings.[35]

(iv) *Octogonal shaped foot-stool*

A plain octogonal foot-stool (Fig. XVIII, 8), probably, hallow within is depicted in Cave-II.[36]

Thus, the foot-stools in the early Indian art are depicted profusely. In literature, the *Suttavibbhanga*,[37] the *Mahāvagga*,[38] and the *Cullavagga*[39] mention the foot-stools at several places. The *Mahāvagga* and the *Cullavagga* speak of the *pādapīṭhas* used to place the washed feet.

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6. Barrett, *Op. cit.*, Pl. V. 15
7. *Ibid.*, Pl. VII, 53.
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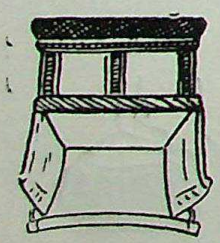
9. *Ibid.*, Pl. XXXII, 40.
10. *Ibid.* Pl. XLIV, 89.
11. *Ibid.*, Pl. VII, 53.
12. Longhurst, *op. cit.*, XLV-a; Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, Fig. XI, 21.
13. Longhurst, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XL-b
14. Longhurst, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XL-b
15. Comparable example comes from Amaravati sculptures (wood no. 89 and 104 of pages 148 and 240 respectively in Mitra's book on *Indo Aryans*, Vol. 1 and *Gāndhāra sculptures* (Herald Ingholt, *Op. cit.*, fig. 3



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16. Mitra, *Op. cit.*, P. 260.
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18. *Ibid.*, Fig. XI, 19.
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22. Sivaramamurti, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XII, 1, XX-1, L.B. Barrett, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XXXIV, XLV.
23. Ramachandran, *Op. cit.*, (Goli sculptures), Pls, IV.1, VI.2
24. Longhurst, *Op. cit.*, XXXIX-b; Cf. Barrett, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XXVII
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26. Marshall, *Op. cit.*, Pl. 34, fig. 54; Pl. 65, fig. 94; Pl. 69, fig. 98 Pl. 92, fig. 128; Pl. 93, fig. 129; Pl. 105, fig. 144 and Herald Ingholt, *Op. cit.*, 11.
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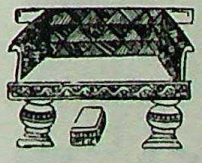
35. *Corpus Inscription Indicarum*, Vol. III, 39. P. 182.
36. Dhavalikar, *Op. cit.*, P. 98, Fig. XXV. 15
37. *BD.*, iii, *Sanga Disease*, IV, 1; *VA*, 913 says a foot-stool to place washed foot.
38. *Mahāvagg*, i, 6, i, i, ii, 25, ip; i, 25, 14; IV, 1, 36; IV, 173, IX, 101; S, 4. 1. 3. 5.
39. *Cullavagga*, 1, 28; VIII



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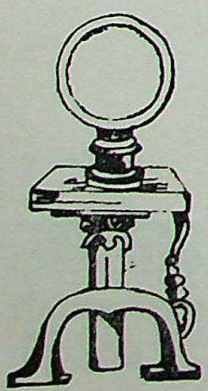
BEDSTEADS

Generally, bedstead has a wooden frame consisting of four beams; two beams are short and the other two are long (nearly twice the length of the shorter ones), then each of a pair was perhaps kept parallel to each other and joined at the ends to form a rectangular or the frame of the bedstead. The short sides comprised its breadth and the longer ones its length. Two holes were probably made at the ends of each of the two shorter beams and the side beams were fixed then into them[1]. At the four corners of the frame four legs, presumably manufactured by the technique of turnery were fixed.[2] All the five parts of the leg from top to bottom, namely head (*Śiras*) pitcher, (*kumbha*), Shank (*jaṅghā*), base (*ādhāra*) and roof (*khura*) are easily seen[3]. The *kumbha* is so called evidently because of its fashioned like a pitcher. It is referred to as *āmalaka* in the Buddhist literature.

The bedsteads are depicted in the sculptures revealing the life scenes of the Buddha and the Jātaka stories. Invariably, they occur in the scenes depicting "Māyā Devi's dream" or the "*Mahāpari-nirvana*".



At Barhut, the scene[4] revealing "Māyā Devi's dream" illustrates a bedstead (*Fig* XVIII, 1.) The bedstead is having pillar shaped legs and Māyā is shown lying on the bed with one of her arms so kept as to serve as a pillow and the knees stretched. This *prasārita* posture as classified by Bharata in his *Nāṭyaśāstra*[5] is the usual posture of Māyā invariably found in the sculptures depicting "Māyā Devi's dream" in early Indian art.

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At Sanchi, in one of the reliefs[6] couples are shown seated on a bedstead in a garden. Three pairs of couples are depicted in the same panel sitting over a bedstead (*Fig.* XVIII, 2). These bedsteads may represent *Okāsa-senāsanam* of the Buddhist literature. Again, elsewhere[7] the depiction of a bedstead can be made out. The scene is that of Māyā Devī's dream and Māyā is shown lying on a cot which is however not clearly depicted. But, one can make out a cot from the context of the story. But for these examples, nowhere the illustration of the cot can be seen in the whole range of Sanchi reliefs.

At Amaravati, the depiction of bedsteads is more than once. The sculpture[8] revealing "the Māyā Devī's dream" illustrates a bedstead. The queen Māyā is shown lying over the cot in her usual characteristic posture of lying.

At Nāgārjunakoṇḍa the depiction of a bedstead is varied and interesting. In one of the sculptures[9] the fringe of the cot frame is decorated with beaded pattern (*Fig.* XVIII, 3). The frame of the bed probably has strong cord, woven across and running through holes pierced in it.[10] The bedstead is made either of wood, cane, or split bamboo and is the *Vetra paṭṭikā* as mentioned by Bāṇa.[11]

The two sculptures (no. 47 and 48)[12] revealing Māyā Devi's dream offer fine examples of a bedstead. A peculiar roll shaped thing, probably a long pillow (*Bombohaṇa*) is to be seen besides Māyā on her bed. Similar rolled thing is invariably found on the bed of Māyā depicted in the sculptures of Barhut[13] and Amaravati[14] and in the Gāndhāra art[15]. It is quite probable, as construed by Sivaramamurti that this roll shaped thing or a large pillow on a bed may characterise the bed of a pregnant women.[16]

Another sculpture[17] depicting the dead body scene reveals a bedstead over which a dead body is made to lie in *Ā ivartita* posture (i. e. lying with face downwards as mentio-

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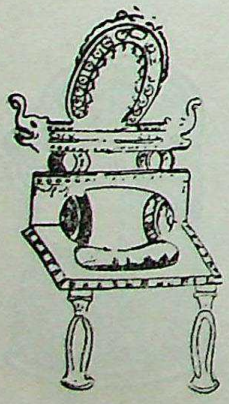
ned by Bharata in his *Nāṭyaśāstra*). The bedstead is precisely similar to the one noticed above.

Again, a lintel slab (no. 49) depicting Campeyya Jātaka illustrates again a bedstead of similar kind. The queen Sumanā, the wife of nāga king Campeyya is shown lying over the bedstead.

Slightly different variety of bedstead or cot is seen depicted in a relio panel.[18] The cot frame in this case is different from those found in the above examples. Here, it has curved beams lengthwise, while the breadthwise beams are shorter as seen in the case of the above one. The legs of the cot also differ in this case by having plain and vertical uprights in contrast to the elaborate legs of the above examples. A bed cover (*Uttarattharaṇa*) can be made out distinctly. The bedstead with its pillow and coverlet arranged on the bed constituted the *senāsana* (bedding).

At Gāndhāra the bedsteads appear on two occasions, namely the scenes of Māyā Devi's dream and the death of the Buddha. However, the best example of the bedstead represented in the Māyā Devi's dream is preserved in the National Museum, New Delhi.[19] In that the bedstead is shown having legs carved to represent the stylized forms of horned animal. A bed cover (*Uttarāttharaṇa*) can also be made out distinctly.



The bedsteads with pillar shaped legs also occur in the panels[20] depicting Māyā Devi's dream. But for these legs, the bedsteads are exactly similar to the above described ones.

Again, some panels[21] depicting the death of the Buddha, represent bedsteads, having elephant faced legs or pillar shaped legs. Thus, the best example of the bedstead, having elephant faced legs, comes from the panel depicting *Mahāparinirvāṇa* of the Buddha. In this panel, the bedstead is provided with elephant faced legs. The tusks of the elephant are clearly visible. The *senāsana* is clearly sculptured

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(*Fig.* XVIII. 4). The Buddha is shown lying in *prasārita* posture, as seen in the case of Māyā.

In another instance[22] also can be seen a bedstead of this kind with the Buddha lying over it. It is very much akin to the above one except for its legs (*Fig.* XIX. 5). Similarly, the bedstead with pillar-shaped legs are not wanting (*Fig.* XIX. 6).

At Ajanta the illustration of beds occur both in the earlier and later group of paintings. The bedstead depicted in the panel revealing[23] Saddanta Jātaka, however, cannot be seen fully. It has fine moulded legs. A rectangular top has been mounted on these legs. A pillow and a bed cover can also be made out (*Fig.* XIX. 7). Another bedstead gets its depiction in the panel[24] revealing "conception scene." It has a thick rectangular top mounted on four legs. The sides of the top are decorated with an exquisite arabesque pattern. A roll cushion is seen on the bed (*Fig.* XIX. 8). Somewhat parallel bedsteads occur on Gupta coins.[25]

These bedsteads that appear in the early Indian sculpture can be identified as *Mañcas*. The bedsteads constituting the household furniture are useful and indispensable as a means of relieving fatigue, inducing sound sleep, maintaining vigour and providing restful ease and comfort. It is definitely suggested that the furniture is no furniture if it fails to serve as a means to these ends.[16] In literature references to bedsteads are many. Both the *Rigveda*[27] and the *Atharvaveda*[28] make mention of nuptial bedsteads and those used by the king and his wife. The later *Saṁhitās*[29] and *Brāhmaṇa*[30] also speak of the bridal bedsteads. The *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* actually refers to the wood *talpa* to mean a bedstead prepared out of *Udumbara* wood. It is usually with four feet and four frame pieces (*Ushyala*) and is embellished with embroidery and inlay work.[31] Similarly, Pānini refers to the words *Khaṭvā*[32], a cot and *paryaṇka* or *palyaṅka* a couch.[33]

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The Buddhist text defines the term *Mañca* (the bedstead) that it should be made of eight finger breadh (*aṅgula* high) according to the accepted finger breadth[34] except for the knotched ends below.

Four kinds of *Mañcas* are enumerated; namely, a long one (*Masāraka*), one with slots (*bundikabaddha*), one with curved legs (*kulīrapādaka*) and one with removable legs (*āhacca pādaka*).

The *masāraka*[35] is made by boring a hole into the feet of the couch and putting through a notched end *mañca-pāde vijjhitvā tattha aṭṭaniyo pavestvā kato*). The *bhundikābaddha* is made by holding the bedstead together, having burnt the feet of the couch with knotched ends[35]. The *kulīrapādaka* is made with animal feet, like the feet of horses, rams, crab etc. The *āhaccapādaka* is made by piercing the leg. It is a collapsible bed whose legs or feet can he put on and taken away at pleasure by drawing out a pin.[38]

The poet Kālidāsa[38] refers to the words *talpa* and *paryaṅka* which mean a high bedstead. Subsequent work like *Amarakosa Mānasāra, Bṛihat Saṁhita*[40] etc., make frequent references to the bedsteads known to the period.

Outside India, the Egyptian tomb remains, show typical couches, wood frames, with lacing of hide or rope, often made to fold.[41] The cots of bedsteads had invariably turned or animal shaped legs. The pillow was a wooden stand curved to fit the head. The Greek sculptures also show high framed bedsteads with turned legs probably of wood. Roman beds were even higher with a raised head section. Some Pompeican houses had curtained alcoves for beds.[42]

Mattress

Sometimes mats or mattress are also used for sleeping. At Barhut, the sculpture[33] revealing "love-intrigue and uniquities of a man and a woman ending in sufferings in the *kākola-niraya*", a baby is shown sleeping over a mattress. A

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pillow (*Biṁbohaṇa*) is also provided. The mattress is seen spread over the floor. Again, another representation of a mattress occurs at Amaravati. In the panel[44] revealing "night before renunciation", the female attendants are shown sleeping over a mattress. They are sharing the mattress.

The mattress may represent *tulika*[45] of the Buddhist literature. The Buddhist texts also speak of *cilimikā* or *cimilikā* (carpet) *tiṇa-santharo* (grass-mat) *paṇṇa-santharo* (leaf-mat). They are distinguished as *Santhata Senāsanaṁ*, the furniture that can be spread and folded.[46]

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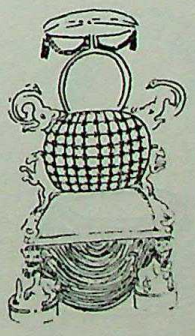
1. Varāhamihira in the Bṛhat Saṁhitā prescribes a specific order (*pradaksināgra*) in fixing the frame of the cots or bedsteads. The *apasavyā-pgra* order is strictly forbidden and supposed to cause fear from ghosts (*Bṛhat Saṁhitā*, XLLLVIII, 27); vide A.M. Shastri, *India as seen in the Bṛhat Saṁhitā of Varahamihira* (Delhi, 1969) p. 252.
2. This art of turning on the lathe is very ancient. As early as in the 7th cent. B.C. in Grece it was in wide spread. This art was probably developed in the wood producing areas of the Middle East and from there, it spread slowly into the Greek main land (Singer and others, *History of Technology*, Vol. 1, P. 192). In the Hellenistic period of turning was introduced into Egypt and other parts of the Roman World (Singer and Others, *Loc. cit.*, Vol. I, P. 688, 233, fig. 196).
3. Cf. Maithili Sarana Gupta abhinandana Grantha, P. 898, fig. 39.
4. Barua, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XXVI, 21-24.
5. Bharata in his *Nātyasāstra* speaks about the various kinds of lying down postures on the bed. They include *akuṅcita*, *sama*, *prasārita*, *vivartita*, *udvahila* and *nala* (*Nāṭyasastra*, P. 236-242).
6. Maisey, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XXII, Fig. 1
7. *Ibid.*, Pl. XVI.
8. Barrett, *Op. cit.*, Pl. VII (53).
9. Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, Fig. XI. 22.
10. *Vin.*, ii, P. 167, VI, 2,6.
11. *Harshacarita*, P. 151
12. Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, P. 175, foot-note, 131.
13. Zimmer, *Op. cit.*, 31-d,



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14. Sivaramamurti, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XII, fig. 11.2, fig. 2-a.
    Barrett, *Op. cit.*, Pl. VII
15. Herald Ingholt, *Op. cit.*, figs. 9 & 10.
16. Sivaramamurti, P. 138.
17. Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, P. 176.
18. *ASIAR*, 1930-34; Pl. XLV-d.
19. Marshall, *Op. cit.*, Pl. 65, fig. 94.
20. Herald Ingholt, *Op. cit.*, 44, 138 to 142.
21. Marshall, *Op. cit.*, P. 44, fig. 68, Pl. 91, fig. 127.
21. *Ibid.* Pl. 93, fig. 129; Cf. also Pl. 48, fig. 72; Pl. 60, fig. 37 and Pl. 92. fig. 182; Also see Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, fig. XIX, 16.
22. Yazdani *Op, cit.*, Part-III, Pl. XXX.
23. Dhavalikar, *Op. cit.*, Fig. XXVI.
24. A.S. Altekar, *Catalogue of Gupta Gold coins in the Bayana Hoard* Pl. XVIII, 12-13.
25. Girija Prasanna Majumdar, Furniture (Man's indebtedness to plants), *Indian Culture*, Vol. II. No. 1, July, 1935, P. 69.
26. *RV.*, VII, 55.8
27. *AV.*, IV, 5.3; V. 7, 12; XIV, 2, 31, 41
28. *VI.* 2.6.4.
29. *Taitt. Brāh* 11, 2, 5, 3; *Pañch. Brā.*, XXIII, 4, 2; XIV, 1, 10.
30. *Taitt. Crāh.*, 1, 2, 15, 5.
31. V.S. Agrawala, *Indian as known to Pānini* (*A Study of the Cultural Material in the Ashṭādhyāyi*) (Lucknow, 1953) 11, 1, 12, 6.
32. *Ibid.*, VIII, 2, 22.
33. *Sugataṅgula, Sugata* here meaning "Standard", recognised, accepted, right; Cf. *Sugata-Vidhatthi*, a span of the accepted at *Vin.*, iii, 149; Cf. *Sugata Civara, Vin*, IV, 173 below.
35. *Vin.* 11, 149; IV, 357; Cf. also *Vimānabetthu Comm.* 8, 9
36. *Vin.* 773. Also see *Vin.*, II, 149, IV, 40, 357.
37. *Vin.* 773; *Vin.* III, 164.
38. *VA.*, 774; *Vin.* II, 149, IV, 140, 46 , 168, 169; See also *Vibhaṅga Comm.* 365 *Suttanipāta*, 401; *Jātaka*, III, 423; *Dhammapada Comm.* 1, 89, 130; IV, 16; *Vibhaṅga Comm.* 20 etc.
39. *Raghu* V.75; XVI. 6; See also B.S. Upadhyaya, *India in Kālidāas* (Allahabad, 1947), P. 214 f.
40. *Amarakośa*, 2, 3, 138; Shastry, *Op. cit*, P. 289
41. Aronson, *Op: cit.*, P.29 and 29 f
42. *Ibid.*, P. 29 f and Seyffert, *Op. cit.*, P.95
43. Barua, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XIV-10a
44. Barrett, *Op.cit*, Pl. XII, (118).
45. Cf. *Vin.* I, 192; III, 150; *Aṅg.* I, 181
46. *IC.*, Vol. II, No. I, P. 69.

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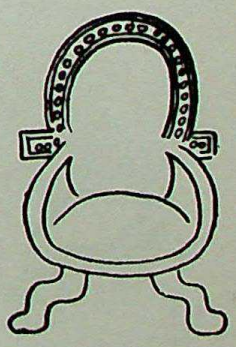
10

PILLOWS AND CUSHIONS

Pillows and Cushions (*biṁbohaṇa* and *bhisi* respectively) were freely used as is evident from the sculptures. Buddha's empty throne is invariably illustrated with two pillows, one to sit upon and the other to lean against. In some cases cushions are seen placed on the furniture exactly fitting into them.

The cane-seats or *moras* are usually represented with pillows having rounded corners. Such circular pillows are particularly chosen so as to suit the cane-seats precisely. Invariably, the cane-seats appear in the sculptures with cushions provided over them.

At times the *āsandī* type of furniture is seen provided with as many pillows as the number of persons occupying them. In few instances a cushion is shown used as a seat independently without placing it on any item of furniture. As it would appear, the pillows and cushions were all well stuffed, occasionally were also very large.



An instance where a cushion seat is used independently without placing it on any item of of furniture occurs in Barhut sculptures. The sculpture[1] revealing "Māyā Devī's dream" illustrates two such cushion seats. Two female attendants are seen sitting over them.

Again the sculpture[2] revealing 'Sarabhanga Jātaka' illustrates a seat presumably made of *Kusa* or bark. A sage is shown sitting over it. It is interesting to note that Bharata in

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his *Nāṭyaśāstra*[3] prescribes a *Vṛsi* (*kusa* grass seat) to the sacrificer. The Buddhist literature[4] speaks of the seats made out of *Khus-Khus*, *muñja* and reeds.

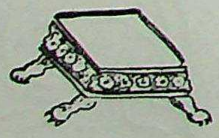
At Sanchi, the depiction of cushion seats are many. They have been used as independent seats without placing them over any item of furniture. Thus in one sculpture,[5] two male devotees are shown occupying circular cushion seats (*Fig.* XX, 1). Again, on the western pillar of the nothern gate-way[6] are carved as many as sin circular cushion seats, over which are seen sitting six male devotees.

In the Amaravati sculptures, the depiction of the pillows and cushions are frequent. Buddha's empty throne is invariably represented with two cushions, one to sit on and the other to lean.[7] The stitches for keeping the stuffed material in position sometimes seen in almost *svastika* fashions[8] or in regular parallel lines.[9] The cushions used on some of the seats exactly fitted to the frames and from their covers hung small tassels that added to their beauty.[10]

At Nāgārjunakoṇḍa the illustration of pillows and cushions are many and include (i) two pillows invariably associated with the empty throne of the Buddha (ii) the cushions with tassels hung from their covers (iii) round or oval shaped pillows and (iv) cushion fixed in the seat frames.

(i) *Two pillows associating the empty throne of the Buddha.*

The panels[11] illustrating 'the first sermon in the deer park, and the miracle of Śrāsvatī, 'represent the Buddha's empty throne over which two pillows, oval or round in shape are placed. Of them, one is meant for sitting, while the other is to lean against. The stitches after stuffing are seen running almost in the *svastika* fashion. The stuffed material was usually wool, cotton, bark, grass or *tālī* (palmyra) leaves.[12]



(ii) *The cushion with tassels hung from their cover* :

This variety of cushion is illustrated in the panel[13] revealing 'the transport of the relics'. The cushion is so placed over

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the *Siṁhasāna* as exactly to fit into it. Two tassels are seen hanging from the covers of the cushion adding beauty to it. Again, the panel[14] illustrating 'Chandaka's nivedana about Sidhārtha's *abhiniṣkramaṇa*' depicts a pillow of this variety but used in different manner. In this case, the pillow is used to lean against. It is seen placed against the back of the small throne over which Śuddhodhana is sitting desolate. The pillow is seen covering the entire back of the throne. The two rounded terminals at the two corners of the pillow are clearly seen. The stitches of the pillow run in such a manner that they meet at both the corners of the pillow.

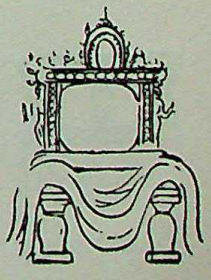
(iii) *Pillow with round or oval shaped corners.*

This type of pillow is illustrated in the panel[15] depicting 'Daśaratha jātaka'. A pillow with rounded corners is partly visible at the back of the king Daśaratha sitting over a *Siṁhāsana*. Such pillows with rounded corners were known as *maṇḍalāgrā bṛisi*.[16] The pillow in the present case is stitched in the fashion which gives the appearance of a *āmalaka*.

However, a clear example of this kind of pillow comes from another panel[17] illustrating 'Māndhātu jātaka'. In this, two cane-seats, over which female attendants are sitting, contain pillows resembling *maṇḍalāgrā bṛisi*.

(iv) *Cushions fixed in the seat frames*

A fine example of a cushion fixed in a cane-seat is found in the panel[18] illustrating 'the first sermon in the deer park'. In this case, the stitches of the cushions are distinctly seen. Again, in a panel[19] illustrating 'the casting of the horoscope', we get two kinds of cane-seats, one contains a pillow of *maṇḍalāgrā bṛisi* type. Over this, the queen Māyā is shown sitting. The other one is occupied by a prince. In this case, the cushion of the cane-seat is fixed in the frame itself.



An instance of a cushion seat using independently without placing over an item of furniture occurs in the panel[20] illustrating "king Kappina's conversion". The king Kappina and

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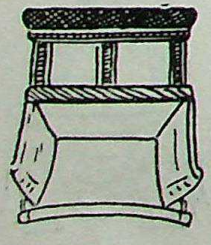
his minister are shown sitting over a cushion seat, in triangular shape and having round terminals. The cushion seats represent *maṇḍalāgrā bṛisi* type.

At Gāndhāra the representation of pillows and cushions are many. The sculpture[21] revealing "Adoration of the Bodhisattva's head-dress in the Trayatriṁsa heaven" illustrates a thick circular cushion seat. It is placed over a throne. A turban is shown kept over it. Again, in another panel[22] revealing "Sleep of the women", circular cushion seats are depicted. The female attendants are shown sitting over them.

In the panel[23] revealing "The Buddha enthroned with Vajrapāṇi and seven female devotees", a thick rectangular cushion seat is kept over a *mañca* seat. The Buddha is occupying the *mañca* seat. The cushion seat has a decorated coverlet.

At Ajanta several varieties of cushions are represented. The paintings reveal at many places rectangular cushions with rounded corners. The one represented in the scene[24] revealing "Śankhapāla Jātaka" is probably encased in a pillow cover which contains decorated pattern (*Fig.* XX, 2). A bolster (*bhisi*) is also provided to facilitate the person to lean against it. The bolster is large and has rounded corners. In the same mural[25] and elsewhere[26] an oval shaped cushion is also depicted. The cushion seat is decorated with broad strips and is fringed with pearls. In this case also another semi-circular cushion is kept at the back (*Fig.* XX, 3, 4, 5). These cushions resemble the modern *takia*. In the illustration, the circular cushion seat kept over the throne has lotus design.



Roll cushions are generally seen at the back (*Fig.* XX, 2). Sometimes, they also serve as arm-rests. They resemble the *loḍ* which survives even to this day in many Indian households.

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The innumerable representation of cushions and pillows in the plastic art reflect on their wide spread use. This fact is well corroborated with literary citations. Pillows and cushions were usually red in colour[27]. The coverlets when present were decorated with patterns and figures[28]. The coverlets such as *goṇaka*,[29] *Paṭalikā*,[30] *Vikatikā*,[31] *Kaṭṭhissa*,[32] *Koseyya*,[33] were used. Pillow and cushions were known as *biṁbohaṇa*[34] and *bhisi*[35] respectively.

The roll cushions with rounded corners probably represent *maṇḍalāgrā brisi* mentioned in the Ramayana.[36] The Buddhist texts speak of five kinds of *bhisis* that are allowed in a Vihāra. They are *Uṇṇa-bhisi*, *Cola*, *Vāka*, *tinu*, *Paṇṇa* (i.e.) bolsters stuffed with wool, cotton cloth, bark, grass, or *talipot* leaves.[37]

It is said that the king Bhāskaravarman sent cushions of padded for (Samaūrka upādhāna) and made of figured cloth as presents to Harṣa.[38]

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2. Barua, *Op. cit.*, Pl. LXXVI-130.
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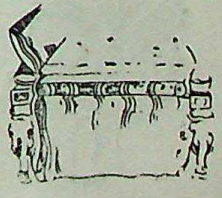
5. Marshall and Foucher, *Op. cit.*, vol. II, XXXIV-a.
6. *Ibid.*, XXXV-A.
7. Sivaramamurti, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XXI, fig. 1. Pl. IV, fig. 33; Barrett, *Op. cit.*, Pls. VIII-B, VLI, IX-a; Zimmer, *Op. cit.*, 88.
8. *Ibid.*, Pl. IV, fig. 33.
9. *Ibid.*, Pl. XII, fig. 5.
10. *Ibid.*, Pl. XII, fig. 12.
11. Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, P. 178; Longhurst, *Op. cit.*, Pls. XXIX-b Ramachandran, *Op. cit.*, (Nāgārjunakoṇḍa), Pls. VI-A; XIII-B & D.
12. *Vinaya Texts*, iii, P. 168; *Cullavagga*, VI, 2, 7.
13. Longhurst, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XLII-b.
14. Ramachandra Rao, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XLVII.
15. Longhurst, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XLV-a
16. Rāmāyaṇa, V, 18, 12.



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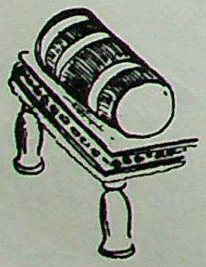
17. *Ibid.*, Pl. XXXIX-b.
18. Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, Pl. 179.
19. Longhurst, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XX-a
20. Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, Pl. VI. P. 52. Longhurst, *Op. cit.*, L-a.
21. Marshall, *Op. cit.*, Pl.39, fig. 62.
22. *Ibid.*, Pl. 64, fig. 93
23. *Ibid.*, Pl. 69, fig. 98.
24. Dhavalikar, *Op. cit.*, Fig. XXVI.7.
25. *Ibid.*, Fig. XXVI. 8
26. Yazdani, *Op. Cit.*, Part I, X; Part II, XXVIII.
27. *JV*, No. 537, P.276; *Dīgha Nikāya*, 1, P. 13, i, 1, 15.
28. Sivaramamurti, *Op. cit.*, p. 139.
29. Goat's hair coverlets with very long fleece. *Cf. Vimāna Vatthu*, 81, *Petavatthu* III, 1; *Aṅguttara*, 1, 137, 111, 50=IV, 394.
30. Wollen coverlets embroidered with flowers usually combine with *Patīkā* (white blanket)., cf. *Vin.* 1, 192, II, 162; *Aṅg.* I, 137, 181; III, 50 etc.
31. Coverlets embroidered with figures of lions, tigers etc., Cf. *Aṅg.* I, 181; *Vin.* I, 192.
32. A silken coverlets, embroidered with gems. Cf. *Vin.* 192 II, 163; *Commentary on Dīghanikāya*, I, 87.
33. Silk coverlets, Cf. *Vin.* I, 192, 281; II, 163, 169.
34. *IC*, vol II, No. 1P. 68; Cf. Vin. 1, 47; II, 76, 150, 208, 209, 218, III, 90, 119; IV 279; *Samyatta.* II, 268; *Aṅguttara* 240, *Vibhaṅga* Comm. 365, *Vishuddhimagga*, 70.
35. *Vin.* I, 287, Sq; II, 150, 170, III, 90, IV, 279.
36. *Rāmāyana*, V, 18, 12.
37. *Vin.* II, 150.
38. Agrawala, *JOI*, Vol. X, p. 104.



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11

BOXES

Boxes also constitute a necessary furniture item of the household and have been represented in the sculptures at many places.

(i) *Jewel boxes* (*ābharaṇa Samudgaka*)

In one of the Amaravaṭi sculptures[1] a woman is shown taking out a necklace and other ornamants from a Jewel box. They are usually referred to in ancient literature as *ābharaṇa samudgakas*.

At Nāgārjunakoṇḍa a box of *Samudgaka* is represented in the panel[2] illustrating "Prince Siddhārtha in the pleasure garden". A female attendant (*prāsādikā*) is shown carrying a rectangular box on her head. The box has a device in the centre of the lid for lifting it. Probably, it may represent a jewel box. Again, precisely a similar box, is shown held by *vāmanikā* portrayed in the panel[3] illustrating "gift of Earth".

There are a few fine illustrations of jewel boxes in the murals. One of them has vertical sides and a domical lid with a knob at the top[4]. It is decorated with circlets and petal-like design on the body while the lid is embellished with a dainty arabesque pattern. In another panel[5] a very similar but larger jewel box is seen. It has in addition a curved handle at the top.

The Jātakas[6] refer to jewel boxes generally made of costly materials like ivory etc.

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(ii) *Betel boxes (tāmbūla- karaṇḍa)*

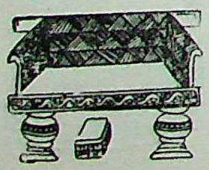
A fine representation of a betel box occurs in a relief[7] from Amaravati. A *vāmanikā* is shown carrying a *tāmbula-karaṇḍa*. Again, the paintings of Ajanta revealing the "Embassy and palace scenes" illustrate such boxes[8]. Palace maids are shown sitting near the seat of their master, and holding boxes in their hands. These probably were meant for betel. One of them is an octogonal box decorated with elephants[9]. The other is pear shaped.[10]

These boxes appear to have been made of costly materials such as ivory (*dantaśapharuka*) as testified by Bāṇa[11]. He also informs that there were special maids (*tāmbūla karaṅka vāhini*) employed by kings and wealthy people.[12]

(iil) *Coffin boxes*

Coffin box, presumbly of iron gets represented twice in the Gāndhāra reliefs. The panel[13] representing "The Coffiin of the Buddha" illustrates a coffin box, probably of iron as enjoined in the *Mahāparinibbāṇa sutta*. It is said that the body of the Buddha was wrapped in five hundred layers of cotton cloth and put into an iron case, filled with oil, over which a double cover of iron was placed[14]. In the relief one can see the clamps by which the cover was fastened[15].

In literature, references to boxes are many. The Jātakas refer to them at several places. Kālidāsa mentions boxes like *mañjūṣā*, *karaṇḍaka* and *tālarṛntapidhāna* etc[16].



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2. Longhurst, *Op. cit.*, Pl. LXIX.
3. *Ibid.*, XXXV-b; Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, Fig. X. 10
4. Dhavalikar, *Op. cit.*, Fig. XXIV, 8.

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5. *Ibid.*, Fig. XXIX. 9.
6. *J.* i, No. 92, P. 24; Also *Mal.*, P. 104; *Harṣacarita*, PP. 130-148.
7. Sivaramamurti, *Op. cit.*, Pl. V. 13.
8. Dhavalikar, *Op. cit.*, P. 89.
9. *Ibid.*, Fig. XXIV, 17.
10. *Ibid.*, Fig. XXIX, 18.
11. *Harṣacarita*, P. 85.
12. *Kādambari*, P. 68.
13. Herald Ingholt, *Op. cit.*, 143-144.
14. Krishna Murthy, K., "The great disease (Death) of the Buddha" *JAHRS*, Vol. XXIX (Parts 3 & 4) P. 52.
15. Krishna Murthy, *Op. cit.*, (Gāndhāra Sculptures), Fig. XIX, 21.
16. B. S. Upadhyaya, *India in Kālidāsa*, Allahabad, 1947, P. 216.

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12

CURTAINS

Curtains are represented in the sculptures. Generally, they are used for maintaining privacy. Various kinds of curtains or blinds known as *chakkalika* can be seen in the Amaravati sculptures[1]. At Nāgārjunakoṇḍa there is a representation of a curtain. The panel[2] illustrating "Nativity and seven steps" depicts a movable curtain *Samsaraṇa* or *Ugghaṭaṇakitikā*. Buddhagosha also refers to such moveable curtains in his commentary on the *Cullavagga*[3].

A fine example of a curtain comes from Ajanta mural revealing the scene of "Haṁsa Jātaka"[4]. Curtains of different colours are seen fixed to a horizontal bar. Three rows of such curtains are depicted in royal court[5]. Bāṇa in his Harṣacarita refers to such curtains as *tiraskraṇī*.[6]

Curtains are usually referred to as *yavanikā* or *javanikā* (*javanīya*) and the lonian Greeks are generally credited with their introduction in India. Perhaps in early period curtains were imported from abroad for merchants on the western coast are said to be buying foreign curtains[7].

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2. Longhurst, *Op. cit.*, Pl. XX-b.
3. *Cullavagga*, VI, 3, 6; *SBE* XX (on dwellings and furniture); *Vinaya* Text, Part III, PP. 157-223; also *CU*. VIII, 1, 3-5; and the foot-note 3 to *CU*, VIII, 1, 4, PP. 278-279; *SBE*. XX.
4. Dhavalikar, *Op: cit.*, Fig. XXVI, 10.
5. *Ibid.*, P. 102.
6. *Harsacarita*, P. 91.
7. *IA.*, Vol. XVI, 1887, P. 8.

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13

EPILOGUE

The foregoing study of the furniture illustrated in the sculptures of Barhut, Sanchi, Amaravati, Gāndhāra, Nāgārjunakoṇda, Mathura and in the murals of Ajanta tries to present clearly, the kaleidoscopic variety of furniture that prevailed in the Suṇga, Sātavāhana, Ikshvāku, Kushāṇa, Vākātaka, Gupta periods and among the people lived in the north-western part of India.

The period under study, i.e. from 2nd Cent. B.C. to 6th-7th centuries A.D. was a formative period in Indian history. It was an era of considerable political immutability and tranquility. The immense economic affluence of the people coupled with religious zeal resulted in the creation of manifold activities of human life. The thriving society was fit to assimilate new trends as also to transform the older ones. Hence, we notice ,during this period under review, the emergence of new innovations and the retrieval of older traditions. In the matter of furniture, several indigenous traits and some foreign impacts are unmistakably noticeable.

The contemporary literary sources of the period under study, form an important sources in supplementing the sculptural and mural data of the furniture. They refer to the variety of furniture articles and amazingly, many of them find place in the lithic and mural representations. The artists of the early Indian art ably immortalised many of the literary descriptions of the furniture by transmuting them

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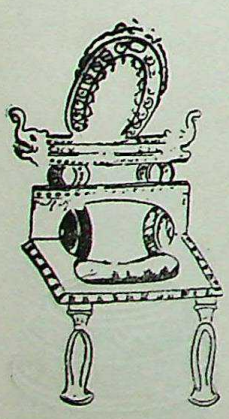
realistically in lithics and murals. The very mention of the furniture items like *paryaṅka*, *āsandi*, *proṣṭha*, *talpa*, *vahya*, *śayana*, *upabarhaṇa*, *upavāsana*, *upastarṇa*, *upadhāna*, etc., reflects in the rich variety of furniture known to the vedic Indians besides betraying the adroitness of the artists who created them. The *proṣṭha*, bench, corresponding to the *mīḍhi* of the Buddhist text is nothing but the stone bench with solid lower structure, represented in the sculptures.

Many furniture articles were in use in the *sūtra* period, The *snātakas* of the *sūtra* period were not allowed to take their meals on chairs. Similarly, the priests of the Mahavrata rite could only sit on *bṛisis* as other seats were forbidden. The seats were invariably, covered with the coverlets, *upavāsana* and *upastaraṇa*.

In the time of pāṇini, an interesting item of furniture namely, wheeled chair (*parpa*) was in use by the disabled persons (*parpikas*) and it is noteworthy that the same practice of using such wheeled chairs for the invalids survives even to this day.

In the Jaina period the furniture articles like *Pallanka* (couch) *Pāviḍha* (foot-stool), *bhisiyā*, (seat), and *Paḍāisijjā* (sofa) were all known. The wicker stands, *Paṭṭakaṇḍolikas* mentioned in the Vinaya texts have plastic parallels in the Indian art and its survivals can be seen in the present day *moras*.



Bharata in his *Nāṭya Śāstra* specifically prescribes the seats according to the status of the people in the royal courts. Thus, the gods and kings and the chief queen, the priests, princes, and ministers get *muṇḍā* seats and the *brāhmins*, their wives, ascetics are allotted wooden seats (*paṭṭas*). It is interesting to note that the rules enjoined by Bharata have been meticulously adhered to in the lithic depiction of some sections of the people. However, there is no such stipulations in using seats while residing in ones own house.

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The furniture referred by Kalidasa in his *kāvyas* give us a fair idea of the furniture prevailed in the Vakataka-Gupta period. The *Viṣṭara*, a honoured seat or the royal high seat of Kalidasa can be seen in the rich seats of Ajanta. The boxes like *mañjūsā*, *Karaṇḍaka*, and *talarṛnta-pidhāna* were in use in the time of Kālidāsa.

The *Mānasāra* refers to the synonymous words like *kākāshṭa*, *khaṭṭaka*, *khaṭvā*, *nishadyā*, *paryaṇka mañca* and *mañchali* all denoting a bedstead.

According to Varāhamihira, one should follow *pradakṣi-nāgra* order in the manufacture of a bedstead. The kings had to occupy the royal seat *bhadrāsana* or *bhadrapīṭha* in the cremonious ablutions.

The study of the sculptures of Barhut, Sanchi, Amaravati, Nāgārjunakonda, Gāndhara, Mathura and the paintings of Ajanta have revealed variety of furnture articles known to the ages. Broadly, the funiture as gleaned from the ancient Indian sculptures and murals comprise thrones, chairs, wheeled furniture, seats and moras, wicker stands, foot-stools and bedsteads of which majority of them are indigenuous while a few of them betray foreign influence.

The thrones with solid base and devoid of arms and back can be identified as *proṣṭha* of the *Rigveda* or the *mīḍhi* of the *Cullavagga*. Invariably, this throne is occupied by the Buddha as is evident from their depictions in Amaravati, Gāndhāra and Nāgārjunkoṇḍa sculptures.

Similarly, the small thrones with or without arms but having pillar shaped legs probably represent the *pallaṅkas* (Pali) or *Paryaṅka* or *Paryaṅkika* (Sanskrit). The *Pallaṅkas* which have no arms are known as *addha-pallaṅkas*. These thrones persist in the early Indian sculptures since Sātavāhana period. But they became very common in Vākāṭaka-Gupta period and are known as rich seats. Some of these seats as seen at Ajanta are decked with pearls and diamonds and they probably represent *ratnāsanas*.

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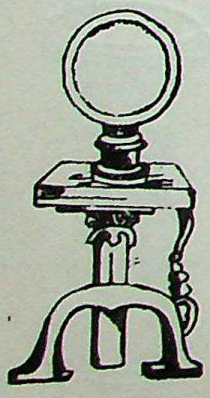
Further, the thrones having animal figures (lions) as armrests or legs or both can be identified as *Siṁhāsanas*. Their wide spread distribution in early Persia perhaps proned Stuart Piggot to trace their origin to western Asia. This is obvious in the light of the Persian impact on the imperial Mauryan era. However, the *Siṁhāsanas* gained popularity in the subsequent centuries of the Christian era as is evident from the frequent depictions in the sculptures of Amaravati, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Mathura etc. Their popularity seemed to have reached zenith, particularly in the Sātavāhana and Ikshvāku periods in the 2nd-3rd centuries A.D. But they became rare in later period and apparently seemed to have been replaced by rich seats or *ratnāsanas* as is evident from the mural depictions at Ajanta. Another interesting throne with prancing deer-supports as seen in the Ajanta frescoes denotes *mṛga-siṁhāsana.*

The large thrones (*āsandis*) are in no way different from the smaller thrones except that they provide accommodation for two or three persons. These large thrones or *sofas* are sparse or almost nil in the early Indian art. The sculptures of Barhut Sanchi, Gāndhāra, (except for a solitary representation) and the early sculptures of Amaravati do not reveal any large thrones. Evidently, these large thrones did not gain favour in the early period. However, their popularity seemed to have increased in the late Sātavāhana and the Ikshvāku periods as is evident from their frequent depictions in the sculptures of Amaravati (later period) and Nāgājunakoṇḍa. But their popularity dwindled in the Kushāṇa and Vākātaka-Gupta period as can be seen from their scanty depictions at Mathura and Ajanta. It is quite likely therefore that these large thrones could have been the contribution or the innovation of the Sātavāhanas and the Ikshvākus.



The *āsandī* type of a seat was prohibited from use by Gautama or the monks according to the Buddhist literature and no violation to this rule can be seen in plastic represen-

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tation. But, the monks were allowed to use an *āsandī* if its legs were either cut down or broken (*bhinditvā*), and however, such instance is not met with anywhere in the plastic representations.

Besides the small thrones, there were also three-legged and high backed chairs with or without arm-rests. Such chairs with arm-rests may represent *Pallaṅkas* and those without arm-rests may denote *āddha-pallāṅkas*. It is noteworthy that these chairs do not get representations in the sculptures of Barhut, Sanchi, Gāndhāra and Mathura and in the paintings of Ajanta. They are represented only at Amaravati and Nāgārjunkoṇḍa. Further, the chairs depicted at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa are shown as used exclusively by the women. It is interesting to note that somewhat similar chairs with sloping or arched out backs known as *Cathedras* were used exclusively by the women of the Roman period.

Outside India, the most familiar types of chairs were known in Egypt, Greece and Rome in ivory, metal, stone and wood. The well-known folding or "X" type chair commonly found in the Eygptian tombs was often carved with animal forms and covered with skin. This Egyptian furniture has possibly becomes the basis of all the later styles.

As for the wheeled furniture, only the Nāgārjunakoṇḍa sculpture reveals a wheeled chair. As already pointed out Pāṇini mentions a wheeled chair (*Parpa*) used by the disabled persons. Probably, the utility of the chair depicted in the sculpture may be different from that known to Pāṇini.

In the plastic representation in some cases, persons are provided with seats befitting to their social status. But the general tendency seems to be that no such convention as prescribing seats according to ones status has been strictly adhered to by the artists while illustrating the seats. For instance, the cane-seats or *moras* though primarily intended for holy persons like sages and Brāhmins are seen occupied by the princes, queens, ministers, female attendants etc., irrespective of their social status in the society.

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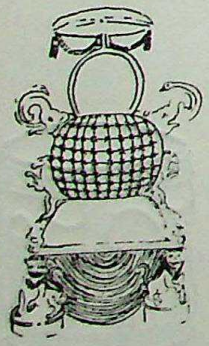
The rectangular seats which are comparatively less depicted to that of the cane-seats represent *mañca* seats of the Buddhist texts. They are present at Barhut, Amaravati, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Gāndhāra and at Ajanta, but they seem to be absent in the sculptures of Sanchi and Mathura. This is perhaps due to the reason that the locals did not favour them. Evidently, the small thrones with solid low-structure were developed from these rectangular seats.

The rectangular low seats represented at Ajanta resemble very much the modern *chowkis* used in the North India in the present day. Sometimes, the hermits represented in Ajanta murals are shown to have used rectangular wooden blocks. Itsing informs that such blocks of wood were widely used by the ascetics more especially by the junior members of the Buddhist order at the time of taking meals. Interestingly, such blocks of wood are still in use in South India being utilised for similar purpose and are known as *Piṭalu* in Telugu language.

The cane-seats seemed to have been used freely throughout the period under review and did not remain the monopoly of any particular section of the people. The cushioned cane seats with their different shapes and designs must have accorded a pleasing appearance besides being comfortable to sit on. These cane-seats appear to have been a mostly favoured item of furniture during the Sātavāhana and the Ikshvāku periods as is evident from their prolific depictions at Amaravati and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa. Sometimes, as seen in Nāgārjunakoṇḍa sculptures the cane-seats were prescribed to the persons as stipulated by Bharata in his *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Thus, the princes are shown seated on *muṇḍā*-seat. It is quite probable that the *mora* might be related to the word *muṇḍā* as both signify identical form and material.



These cane-seats, *Vetrāsanas* persist in the sculptures of Sanchi, Barhut, Amaravati, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Mathura and in the early paintings of Ajanta. However, at Ajanta, they

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are in profusion in the early period, but wane in the later period to give place to the rich seats.

Those cane seats to which backs are added represent *Vidalamañcaka* or *Vetramañcam* and readily get lithographic delineations in the Amaravati sculptures.

The wicker stands or the *Paṭṭa-kaṇḍolikas* of the *Cullavagga* are sparsely represented in the sculptures. When these *Paṭṭa-kaṇḍolikas* are seen used as dining tables, they represent *Bhojana phalakas* of Buddhagosha.

The foot-stools (*pāda-pīṭhas*) constituted an important article of furniture in an Indian household. The foot-stools are generally provided to high thrones, though some exceptions to these occur in the reliefs. Evidently, the height of the throne necessiated the foot-stool. The foot-stools represented in the plastic art are varied and appear in rectangular, square, circular oval and octogonal shapes. Of them, the rectangular ones exceed in number, the square and circular or oval are less frequently represented and the octogonal one is rarely represented. Some of these foot-stools interestingly resemble the *Jalachawkis* of Bengal or *chawkis* of Uttar Pradesh.

The bedsteads representing *mañcas* of the Buddhist literature or *Vettrapaṭṭikās* of Bāṇa were many. Varāhamihira stipulates that in the manufacture of bedsteads one should follow *Pradakṣināgra* order. The bedstead with pillow (*biṁbohaṇa*) and coverlet (*Uttaratharaṇa*) arranged on the bed usually constituted the *Senāsana* (bedding). Some of the bedsteads represented in the Gāndhāra sculptures reveal elephant faced legs. In fixing the legs to the cot the technique of turnery seemed to have been employed as is evident from some of the bedsteads revealed in the Gāndhāra sculptures.

Sometimes, mats and mattress (*tūlikās*) were used for sleeping on the floor. As the one depicted in the sculpture can be folded, it may be *Santhatha Senāsana* of the Buddhist

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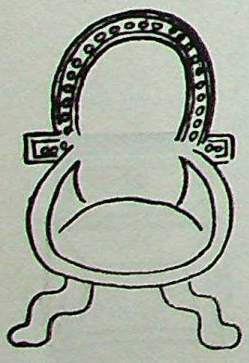
literature. Interestingly, *Cilimikā* (carpet), *Tiṇa-Santhāro* (grass mat), *Paṇṇa-Santhāro* (leaf mat) were all known to the Buddhist period.

Pillows (*biṁbohaṇa*) and cushions (*bhisīs*) were used freely. They are seen usually placed over empty thrones, *āsandis* and cane-seats. Sometimes, they appear in the reliefs as independent seats too. The roll cushions seen kept at the back resemble the present day *loḍ*, while the circular ones kept over the furniture resemble the modern *takias*. The roll cushions with rounded corners may probably represent the *maṇḍalāgra briṣi* mentioned in the Ramayana. It appears that *Uṇṇa-bhisi*, *Cola*, *Vāka*, *Tinu*, *Paṇṇa* (i.e.) bolsters stuffed with wood, cotton, cloth, bark, grass or talipot leaves were not allowed in a Vihāra and this has been strictly adhered to in the lithic and mural depiction. The coverlets like *goṇaka*, *Paṭalikā-vikatika*, *Kaṭṭhissa*, *Koseyya* etc., were also in use.

The jewel boxes (*ābharaṇa samudgakas*) and the betel boxes (*tāmbūla-karaṇḍas*) were all known. The Jatakas refer to jewel boxes made up of costly materials like ivory etc., Likewise, the betel boxes were also decorated and made of ivory (*dantaśapharuka*) as testified by Bāṇa and interestingly they get depictions in the Ajanta murals. For carrying these jewel and betel boxes, *Vāmanikās* were employed as evident from the plastic representations. Bāṇa refers to the special maids, *tāmbūla-karaṅka vāhini* employed by kings and wealthy people for carrying such betel boxes.



Owing to the trade contacts between India and the west, during the succeeding preceding centuries of the Christian era, India came into contact with many foreign countries. With thisthere was much give and take during that period. As a result, the impact of foreigners on India and vice-versa was inevitable. Thereby, the impact of the foreign influence in respect of the furnitures was also imminent. The throne with pillar shaped legs and side arms but devoid of back is one

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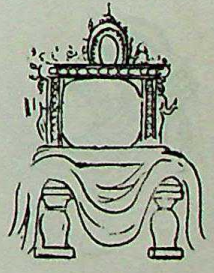
such example. This throne confined only to the early period as is evident from the depictions at Barhut, Sanchi and Gāndhāra and betrays a clear Hellenistic influence. Such seats with side arms were very common in Hellenistic and Roman world from where this type appears to have been found its way into India. However, it does not appear to have found favour in the later period due to the reasons that it has not afforded to sit in the true Indian fashion of the cross-legged posture.

Again, the wheeled brazier represented at Ajanta seems to be un-India. Such wheeled braziers were very common in the classical world and were used for carrying food from kitchen to the dining table. It is interesting to note that the movable braziers of iron resembling the classical pattern are reported to have been discovered from the excavations at Taxila.

Another item of furniture which betrays foreign impact is the three-legged stool or tripod represented in the Gāndhāra sculpture. It distinctly betrays Hellenistic origin. It may be noted that such stands existed in Egypt in modest form as altars, but had never found favour in Greece. The present example might have been introduced to India by the Greeks. Later in Roman period these miniature tripods developed into an elegent tripod in metal.

The tables represented in the Gāndhāra sculptures and the murals of Ajanta distinctly show foreign influence. The X-shaped table revealed in the Gāndhāra sculpture show unmistakable Greek origin. Evidently, the Greeks in turn borrowed such tables from the Egyptians.



Again, the table in the form of tripod revealed in the Gāndhāra sculpture reveals Greek origin and may represent the Greek ornamented table *dephica*. It is noteworthy that the Greeks costly table *monopodid* or *orbes* was resting on one leg with a wooden top cut out of a single log in the

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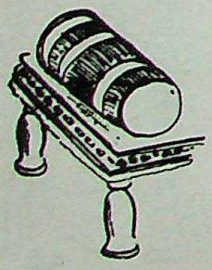
whole of its diameter. It is quite likely that the present example developed from it.

The table with rectangular top mounted on two sets of legs, each pivoting medially on the other as revealed in the Ajanta murals, is again of foreign origin. Such tables were very common in the Roman world and a finest example of it datable to 1st cent. A.D. is reported from Pompeii. It is quite probable that this type of table found its way into India through Greeco-Roman world and continued to be used though rarely, till 5th-6th centuries A.D. as is evident from its representation at Ajanta and Ellora.

Similarly, the interesting dressing table represented in the conception scene at Ajanta again is evidently un-Indian and bears striking resemblance with the ultra-modern examples of our times.

Another variety of dining table low in height and having oval top mounted on curved legs, represented in the Ajanta murals, has unmistakably foreign origin. It is interesting to recall that Athenams refers to similar of dining table of the Mauryan emperor Chandragupta. As is evident from the statement of Megasthanese the antiquity of such tables can be traced to 4th Cent. B.C. In all probability, such tables came into India in the 5th Cent. B.C. during the time of Persian invasion. This would explain its occurrence in India as early as 4th Cent. B.C.

Curtain is again another item of furniture which is said to have been the introduction of the lonian Greeks. Curtains are usually referred to as *Yavanikā* or *Javanikā* and the lonian Greeks are credited with their introduction in India as the derivation of the word *Yavanikā* would show. The moveable curtain *Ugghaṭaṇa kitikā* interestingly gets depiction in the Nagarjunakonda sculptures.



Thus, while the furniture articles like thrones, wicker stands, seats, mattress, foot-stools, bedsteads, pillows and cushions reveal predominant native traits, some of the items

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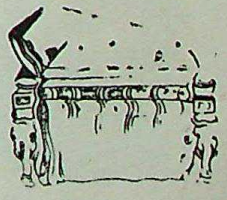
of furniture like tripods, wheeled braziers, tables and curtains denote unmistakable foreign origin. The advent of these foreign furniture articles are evidently due to the trade contacts that the India had with the foreign countries in the early centuries of the Christian era and with the result Greeks, Romans, Persians etc., became responsible in introducing them into India through different regions of the country. However, there has not been any appreciable change during the long span of 5000 years of Indian History in respect of furniture. In majority of the cases the older shapes continue. It has taken a long time to imbibe the foreign elements into our cultural patterns. For, tradition dies hard and more so in the country like India.



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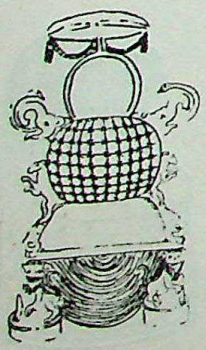

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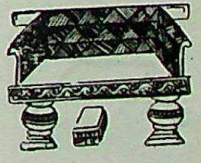

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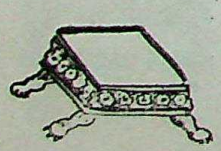

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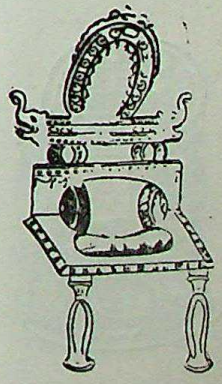

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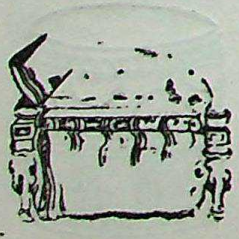

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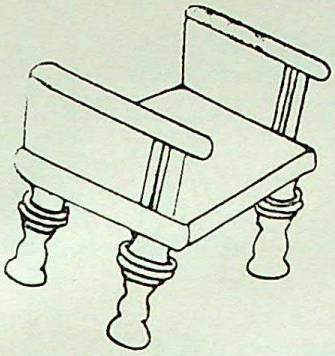

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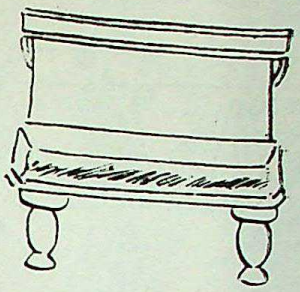

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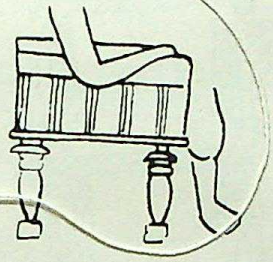

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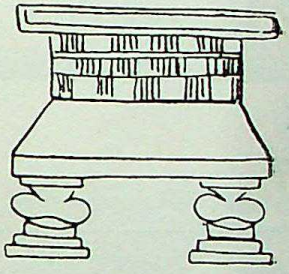

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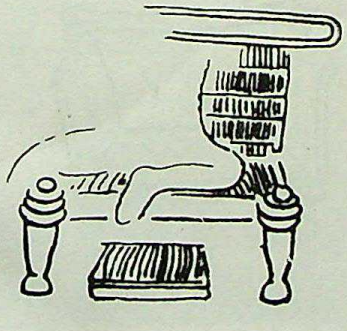

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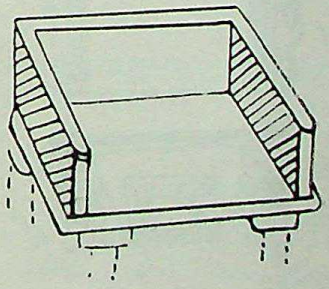

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Figure I Small Thrones

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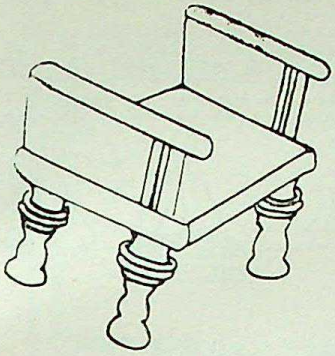

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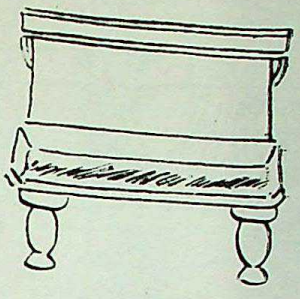

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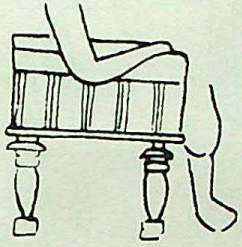

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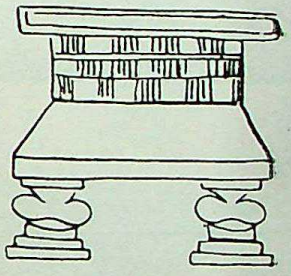

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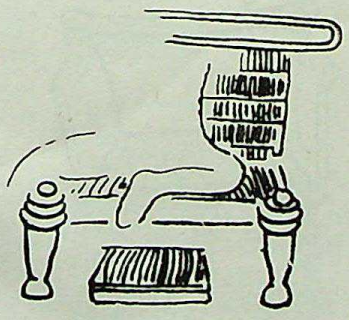

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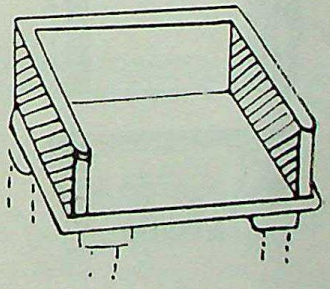

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Figure I Small Thrones

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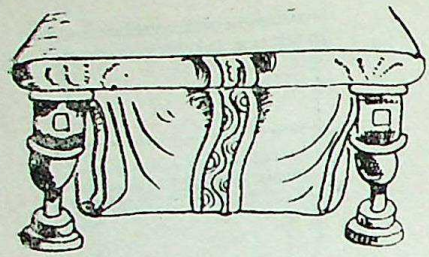

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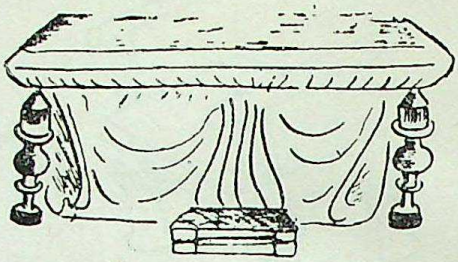

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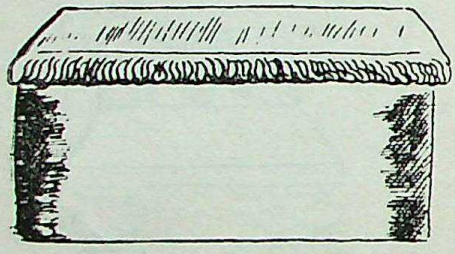

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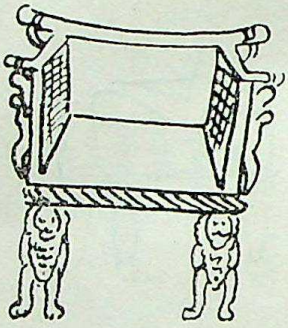

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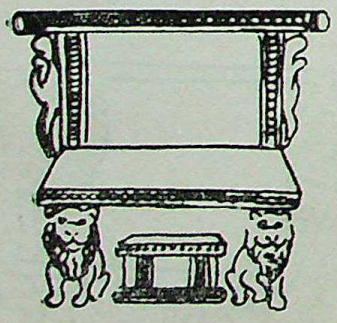

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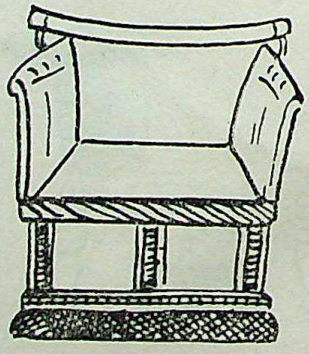

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Figure II Small Thrones

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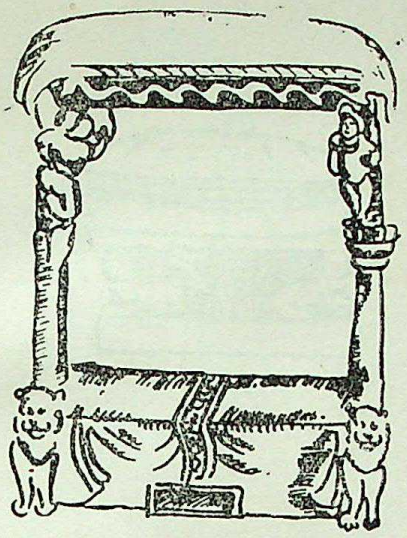

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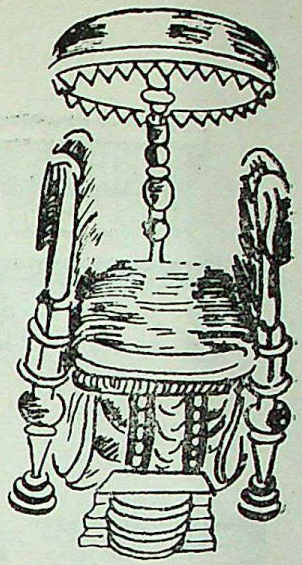

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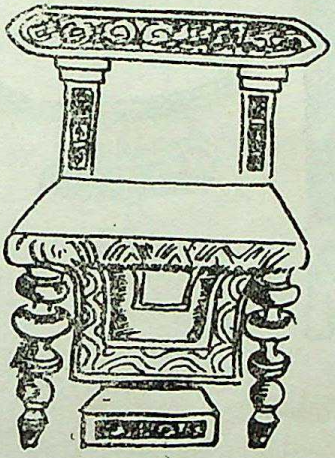

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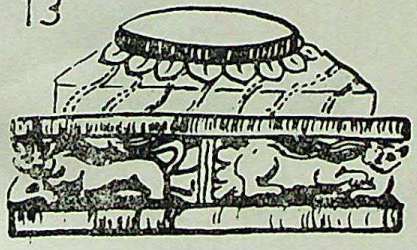

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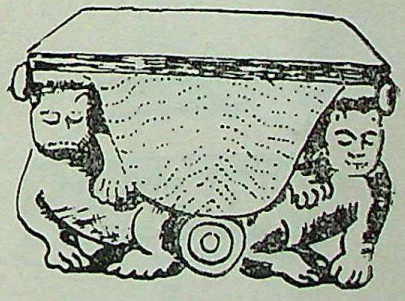

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Figure III Small Thrones

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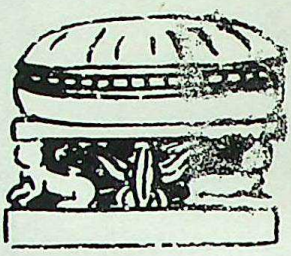

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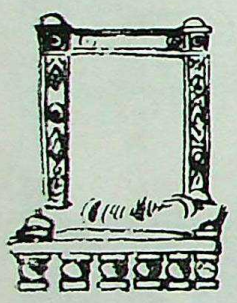

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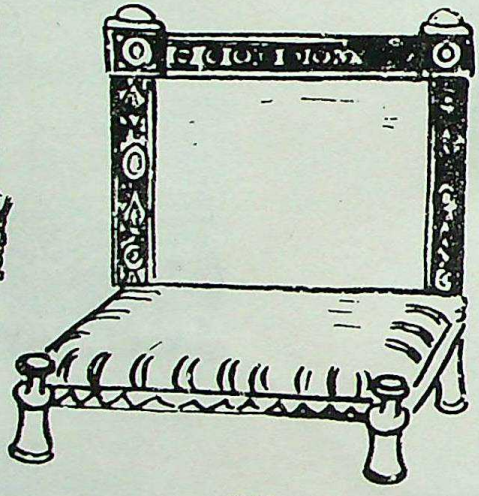

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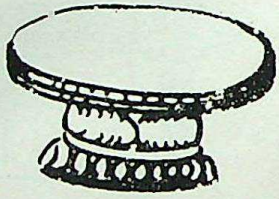

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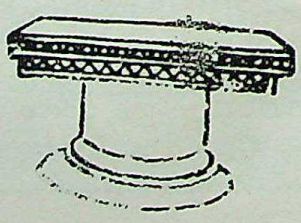

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Figure IV Small Thrones

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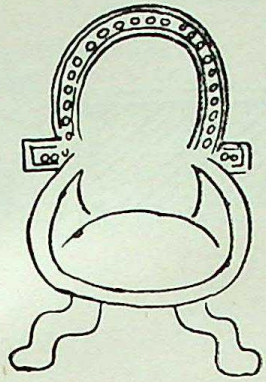

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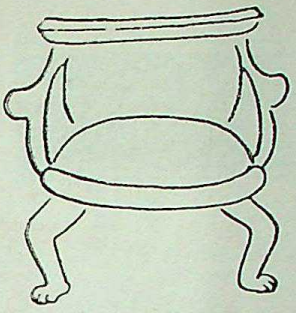

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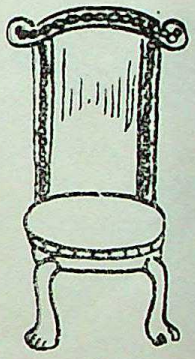

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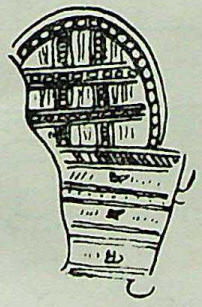

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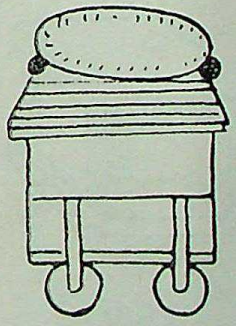

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Figure IX Chairs

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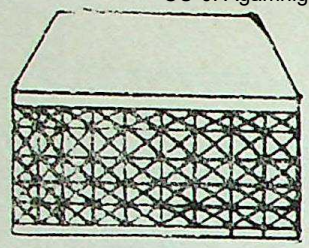

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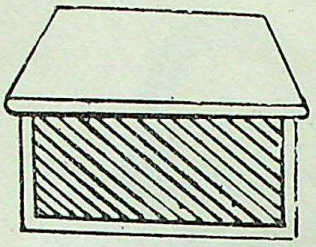

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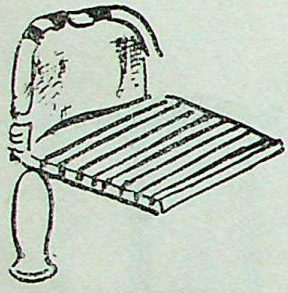

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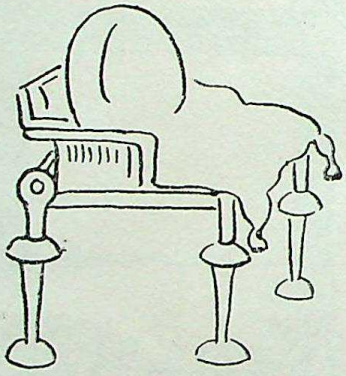

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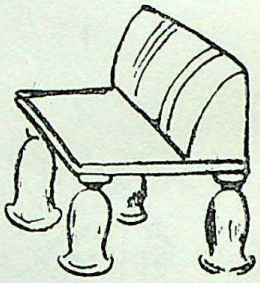

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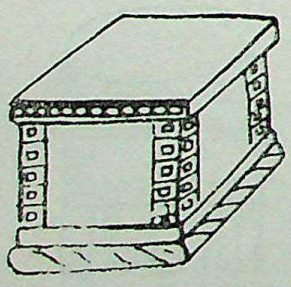

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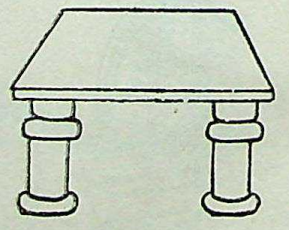

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Figure X Rectangular Seats

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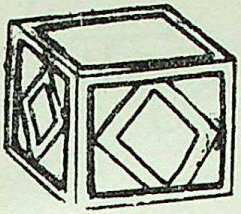

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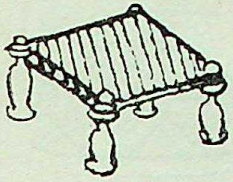

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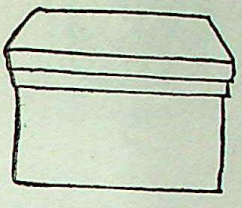

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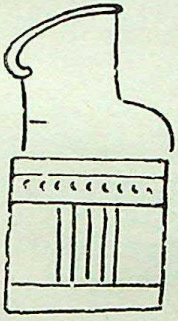

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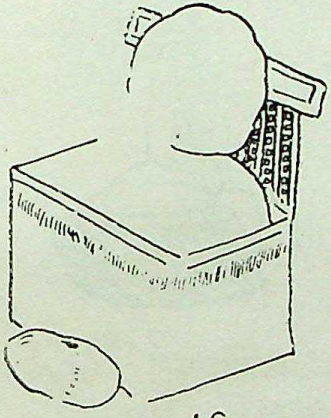

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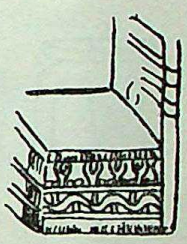

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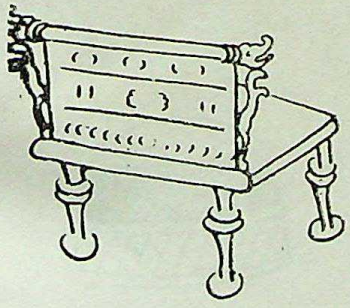

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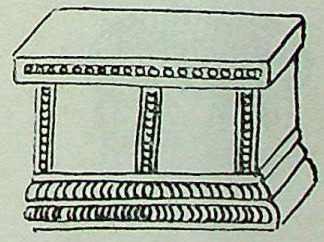

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Figure XI Rectangular Seats

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

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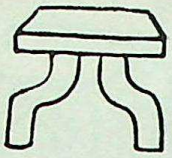

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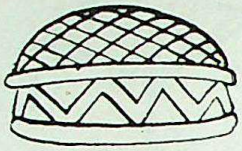

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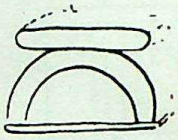

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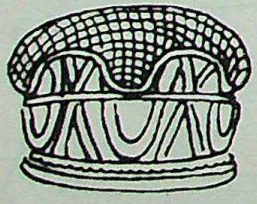

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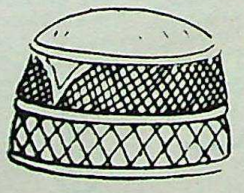

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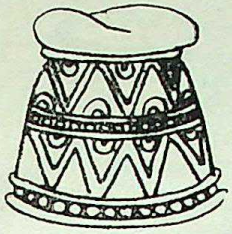
Figure XII Cane-Seats and Stools

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



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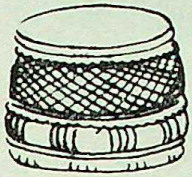

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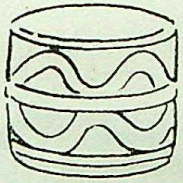

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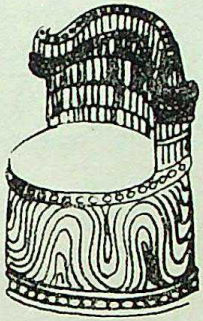

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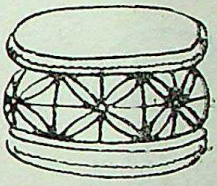

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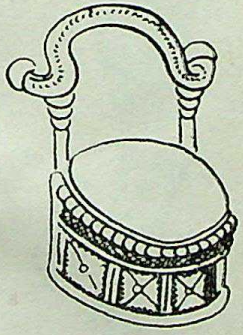

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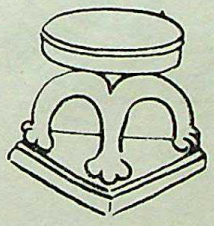

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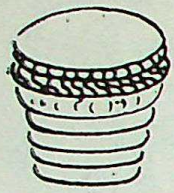
Figure XIII Cane-Seats and Stools

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



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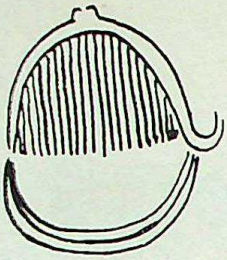

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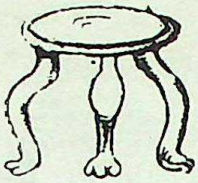

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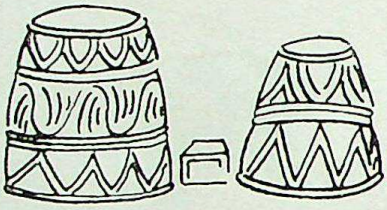

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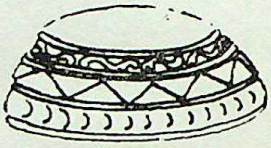

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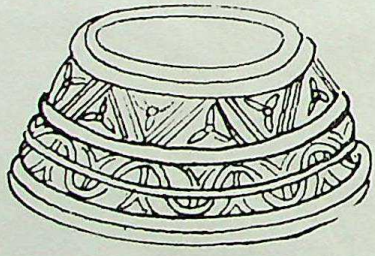

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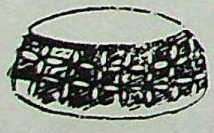

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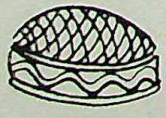

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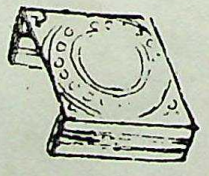

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Figure XIV Cane-Seats and Stools

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

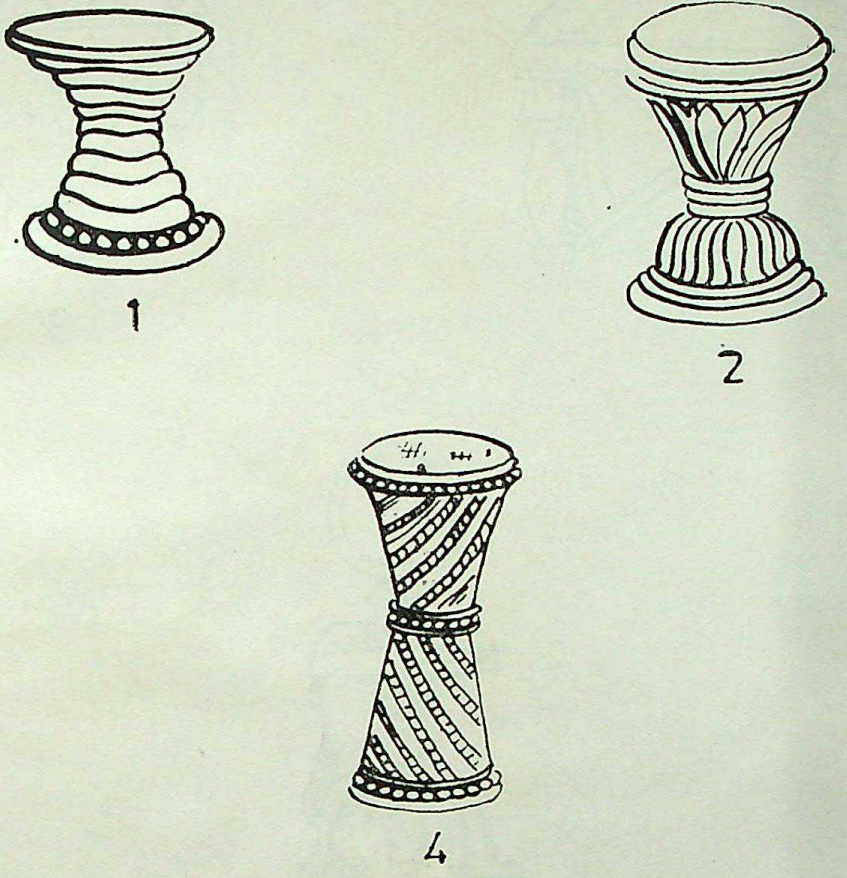
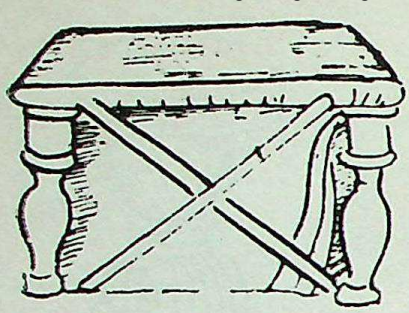


Figure XV Wicker stands

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



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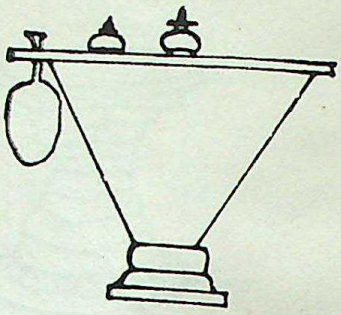

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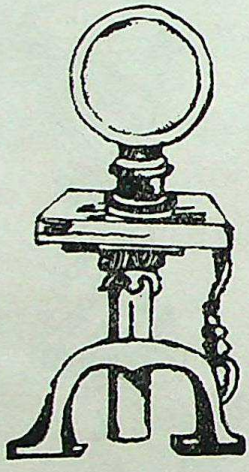

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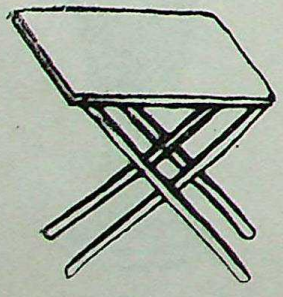

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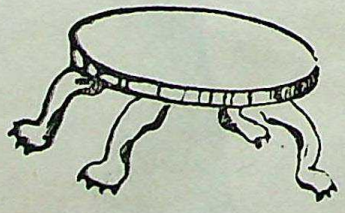

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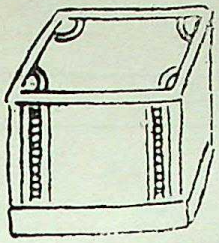
Figure XVI Tables

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



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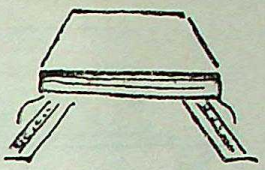

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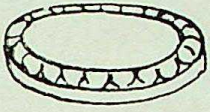

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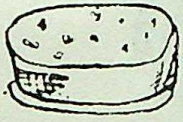

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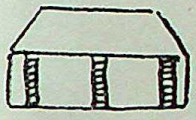

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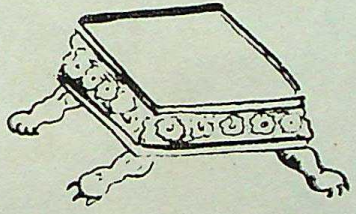

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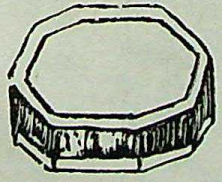

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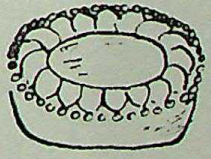

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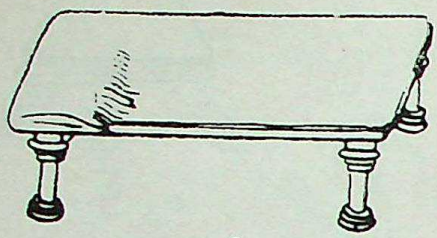
Figure XVII Foot-stools or Foot-rests

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



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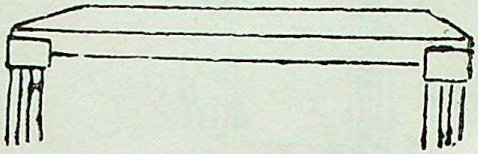

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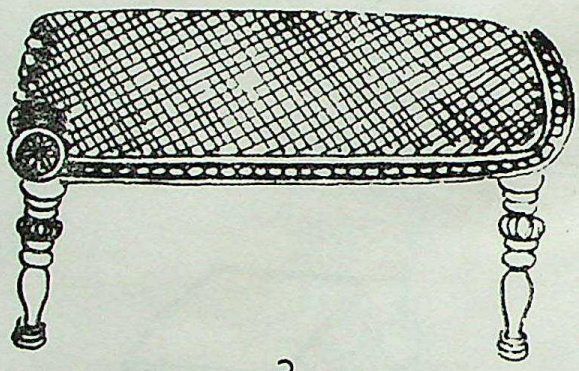

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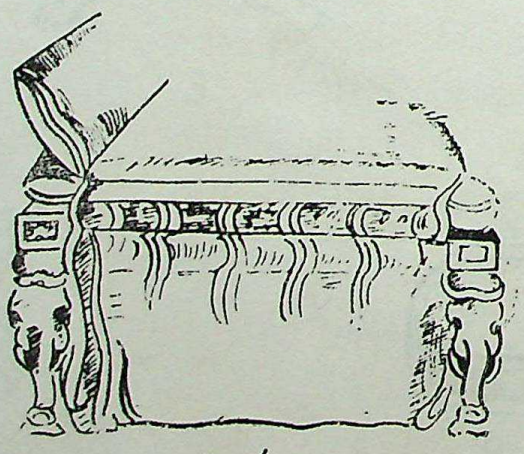

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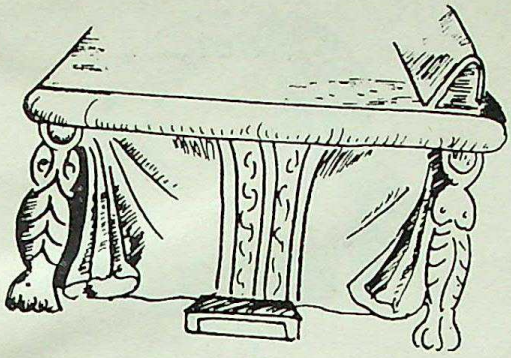
Figure XVIII Bedsteads

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



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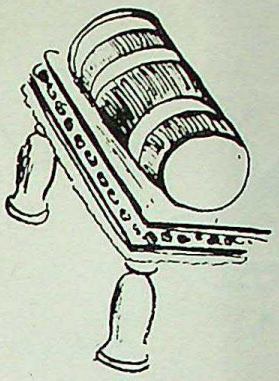

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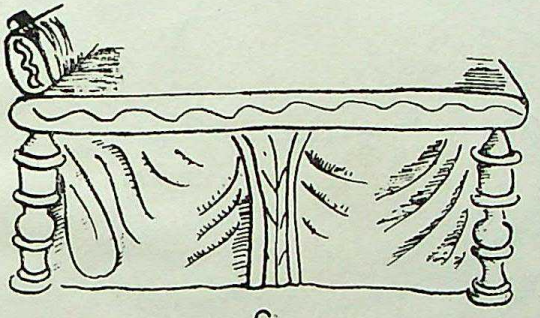

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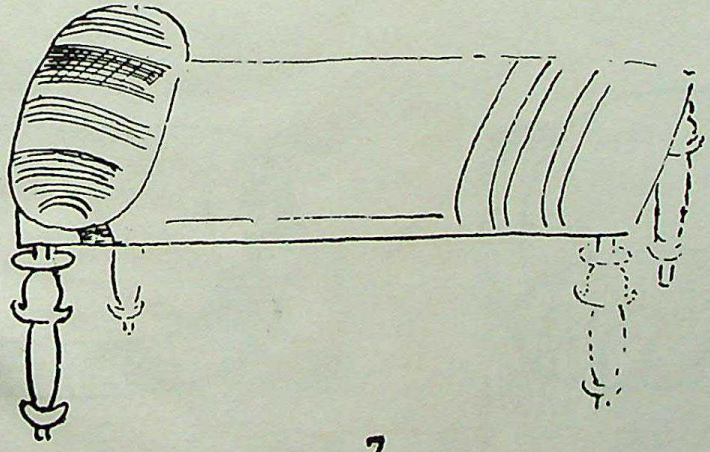

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Figure XIX Bedsteads

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

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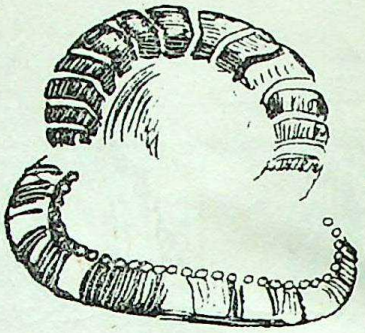

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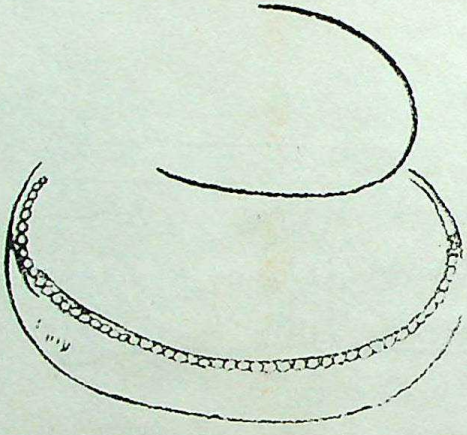

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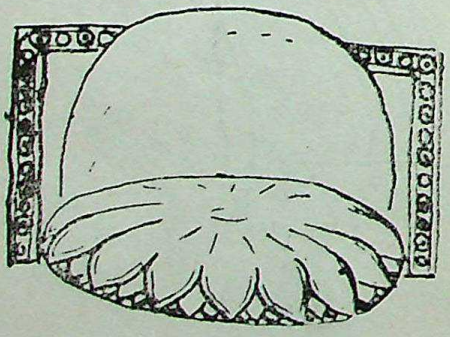

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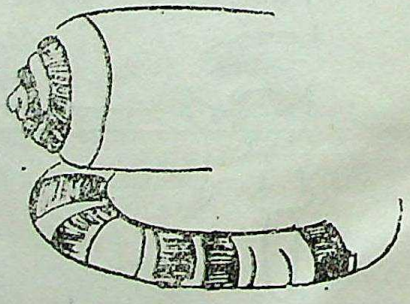

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Figure XX Pillows and Cushions

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

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SUNDEEP PRAKASHAN,
DELHI